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TO

MY SISTER

MRS. S. THRUSTON BALLARD

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MOTOR RAMBLES IN ITALY

I

BADEN-BADEN

OF all the grateful and exciting surprises that were ever showered upon a fellow from one envelope, your letter, Polly, crowns the lot. And just one year ago to-day I last saw you! Did you realize this, and time your note with a nicety equaled only by its contents?

You cannot be serious about dragging your poor mother away from her beautiful Lago di Como, to come clear up here to see me before returning to America! Oh, I say now, I'm not such a has-been as all that! In fact, you would not find me anyway, because Dr. Brentheim, the thoughtful, has just suggested a trip to the lakes and we are leaving in two days. Let the mountain go to Miss Mohammed this time, do! And may I play with you every day for a whole week? It will seem like being in Constantinople again, except—well, except that I shall not be serious for a minute this time.

What a dispenser of delights you are! You really would make a fellow think that his welfare is of vital

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interest to you—and my! the scoldings you do give simply because a chap fails to send out circulars advertising a trivial accident! But you were always good at scoldings—charming little tempests that they were, with a free forgiveness tied up and waiting at the end of each!

I am considering whether to challenge your friend, Wm. Noles, Esq., before leaving here. When he discovered me the other day, I did not suspect he would publish the fact that I was hobbling around on crutches—especially to the one girl of all others I wanted to keep in ignorance. And yet I might have been justly suspicious from the astonishment which crossed his face as he stopped stock still in the road and gazed at me—and then almost hugged my life out; good old Billy! But the cat has wiggled loose, and his arguments—Billy's—have rather convinced me that I am a shade too sensitive; so now, after his clear persuasion that the whole town will not turn out with opera glasses every time I go upon the street, and with the coming of your wonderful little letter, too, I've determined to shake my ten months of hermit life and stir abroad, taking the aforesaid doctor, both as adviser and companion—a fine fellow who is building carefully and well.

I do not know what it is—foolish, of course you will say—but I have always dreaded the ordeal of receiving sympathy. I have never wanted people

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to see me weak enough to yield to pain. That, since you command a reason, is perhaps the only one I had for dropping away from friends, and from the world, after finding myself deprived of the place in it I had always enjoyed. And I may admit a rather pagan wish to preserve the memory of my body when it was strong. You cannot understand this, since you have never experienced the sensation of loss, any more than you have understood—if indeed you gave a thought to it—why, a month after we separated at Constantinople last year, my correspondence with you suddenly gathered itself into one large rocket, flared up, burst and ended. Had I continued to write, I should have continued to implore you, and such would have been an unforgivable sin.

For it has long been a creed all my own that the immortal gods will smile on any man's love, providing his heart is kept clean, and his body strong. Should these fail, let him beware; for in either case he is rendered unfit to enter the holy temple of Venus; a sort of leper he becomes in the realm of Olympus; and must either hide away, or go about forever crying, "Tami! Tami!" I know you will believe that it was purely an honest accident which is robbing me of the sweetest dream man's fancy ever pictured.

But your comprehension of all things human is too sympathetic to be in need of explanations, now that

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I know Billy has betrayed me. Your woman's heart has guessed more than he could possibly have known, and I thank you. Whisper a prayer of gratitude, fortunate Polly, that I shall no more echo the thunder of my previous determination to ignore those three refusals you gave me in so many days, nor continue besieging you in the hope that some time, taken off your guard, you might reply to my importunities: "Oh, well, then—yes."

Old Uncle Ben says he will get into heaven on that principle: that he will go up to the gate, open it, look in, and slam it shut; open it, look in, and slam it again; open it, look in, and slam it again; and keep this up until St. Peter, losing all patience, will yell at him: "Well, either come in or stay out, you fool nigger, you!" Then, he says, he will go in. I may be forgiven now the admission that this was the plan I had intended adopting with you, sweet tyrant. Indeed, I may confess anything now, may I not; since it is but a phonographic record of a passed voice, the pastime of a broken body, a sick heart's fancy, a fool's paradise! And you need not even bother about refusals, should I make love to you again.

Do you realize the trying ordeal you impose by demanding a full account of my accident? Let us have it over, but its history will touch only the high spots, I assure you. After we said good-by

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in Constantinople I went to England, and in a steeplechase my horse fell at the water jump. I have always been distrustful of water jumps; perhaps that is why he fell. The doctors took a week for studious observation, then passed on their way, leaving me shelved and labeled with some-kind-of-a-long-name spine injury. It was then I wrote you about leaving for a big game hunt in Africa, which was intended to explain the silence I knew must follow. Forgive me. That was the only way I could see, the only kind of a lie I could ever tell you. A week later I had myself lifted from the shelf—it was getting intolerably damp in England—and taken over to an Austrian physician, who read my label and sent me here, where I've improved to his entire satisfaction; finally being able, as the perfidious Billy doubtless wrote you, to get about quite nicely.

For awhile the Austrian M.D. came up every week, then detailed young Brentheim to keep an eye on the case—and that is the whole story. There is no pain, I assure you; the trouble will get no worse, and perhaps no better, so philosophically I've become quite accustomed to the quiet life. In fact, I rather prefer it to aeroplanes and polo, which your charming mother always declared would sooner or later knock out my brains.

Since you will meet Brentheim, I must tell you about him. An Austrian count, really and truly

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one, but not as liberally endowed with cash as title. He took up medicine and practices simply as Dr. Fritz Von Brentheim; averring, and logically so, that the lower classes would never have sufficient courage to tell their intimate symptoms to a nobleman, and his fellow aristocrats would regard his struggle as misdirected energy. Figuratively speaking, his sleeves are rolled up, and literally, he's working like a dog. But each year he allows himself a month or so vacation, and therefore is coming with me. I'm devoted to him, and we have splendid times. So much for Brentheim.

The thought of being at Como and near you is really the most exciting thing I have known for ages. There is no spot on this half of the earth I love more than it, nor any one in the whole creation more than you, so why not grow excited?

We shall be at the d'Este. You have a telephone in your villa? What a desecration it does seem, doesn't it, to have telephones and graphophones in that garden spot of romance; almost as bad as those advertisements that used to stick out on the mountain above Como town. Has the classic Italian temperament allowed them to remain?

Somehow that old lake always reminds me of an overgrown, irresponsible and very much spoiled pup, by the way it runs over everybody's front steps, tracking up each with impartial interest; or, when

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"old men still sweep the streets?"

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the wind is out of the north, frisking and cutting up capers and shaking water from itself almost into people's front halls. And no one seems to care; they even like it, as evidenced by the way they have built their musty old entrances right down between his paws.

We shall call you up the minute we arrive. I do hope your balustrades and pergolas are festooned with ivy and creeper, which ought to be rich in color this time of the year, blending with the terra cotta of roofs and other balustrades across the water. For I remember Como in October. It was the dreamiest place in all existence. The aged villas, shrinking back into their shelters of rock; the changing foliage, dropping scarlet leaf by scarlet leaf upon the loamy ground, seemed to be undergoing a magic form of dissolution. I felt charmed and helpless in the presence of this invisible power which, before my very eyes, converted hour by hour the beautiful into the more beautiful.

Do the old men still sweep the streets? And is the sweet olive still in bloom? It is the one fragrance—it and the wild grape at home—which always reminds me of you.

Good-night, dear Polly. In three days—and thank you.

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II

MILAN

I FELT that my thanks, dear Polly, to you and your mother were wholly inadequate to express my gratitude, and Brentheim would fain be kissing your hands yet, I'm sure. There is no denying the fact that you and Como are good medicine —the Count says so and, being a doctor, he should know. Indeed he says that in very truth I am fifty per cent. better, and I've noticed a more or less upward lift in him as well. There now, don't scold me for this timid suggestion, but teasing you is too hard to resist, and no one can deny that he is touched.

I shall never forget our week with you, and it gives me a gleeful turn to think how a hundred or so fellows at home would glare did they know Miss Polly played every afternoon with the selfsame man. It would not do to let on that he wears crutches, for that would be the death knell to its romance. Nor perhaps was it well to let you see how those seven days reopened a rush of happy memories which, despite a year of silence, proved anew what I had already known.

Coming down on the train we happened in the

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"full of corn and smiling faces"

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same compartment with a bishop who entertained us with some things about Como which you may like to add to your already large supply of interesting facts. Having dug exhaustively into the history of these lakes, his information is far-reaching, and his way of telling how funds were raised to build that great cathedral down in Como town (which you insist is the most perfect structure in Italy to illustrate the fusion of Gothic and Renaissance styles—both being exquisite in their sobriety) was delightful; how contribution boxes had been put up in every church throughout the province; how the priests begged during Lent from door to door; how the very poor gave donations of lime and stone for building, and geese to feed the builders; how notaries, under penalty of heavy fines, were obliged to persuade testators to leave something for the Duomo in their wills; how newly appointed dignitaries, both of church and state, on assuming office were expected to make handsome offerings or be ostracized by society; and how, when every other form of levy had been exhausted, a lottery was started. His gentle perturbation over the fact that, since every donation carried its special privilege, the 200,000 golden crowns subscribed must have pardoned a multitude of indiscretions, was expressed with a mischievous twinkle most unchurchly.

His familiarity with Gian Giacomo di Medici, the

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Lorian corsair (whom you call your "favorite devil") was almost brotherly, and I experienced a growing admiration for that adventurer whose schemes for power were so subtle and so daring.

At this time the Duchy of Milan—ruled by a Sforza Duke—was smarting under a recent defeat by the Switzers who had laid hold of all that territory north of Como, known as the Vatelline valley.

Gian saw an opportunity, and began whispering to certain court favorities that, were he given the governorship of Musso—a well nigh impregnable stronghold on the border—he could retake this country and restore it to Milan. As a matter of fact, he intended to keep it for himself, and there set up a little government of his own.

Perhaps the Duke suspected something of the sort; at any rate, he had conferred this important post upon one of his political allies and had no thought of changing. The day soon came, however, when he realized that further refusals would be decidedly awkward, and it was then that he began some clever scheming—clever, at least, for a Sforza.

May I say here that the more one familiarizes himself with these old lines of Italy, the more he is impressed by the subtle potency of some law which governs family characteristics; for, throughout mediæval and later history, a Sforza will almost invariably show the low-brow, animal trait; a Medici, the intellectual,

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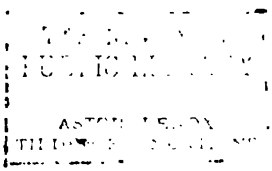

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polished-nail variety of crime; a Podesta, an enthusiasm for high ideals strangely tarnished by inordinate love of flesh; and so on through the list: Baglioni, Piccalomini, Borgia—all have held true to their particular family traits. But my story:

Taking Gian into a private chamber, the Duke explained that just one man stood in the way of this appointment, but were he removed—well, the old fellow shrugged his shoulders and Gian leaned near, asking who was this infernal obstacle; whereupon the wily Sforza whispered the name of one not in any way interested in the future of Musso, but a private enemy of his own.

The next morning dawned upon this man lying dead in the street, and when Gian again faced the Duke he was given the official papers and speeded toward the north. But he had scarcely left the room before the Duke despatched a messenger to the governor in power, with a note which ran somewhat in this wise:

"Gian Giacomo de Medici is on his way with my official seal to take your job. I could not avoid placing you in this embarrassing position, so pray forgive me. When he arrives, be good enough to assign him a quiet spot in your prosperous Campo Santo, and believe me,

Yours truly."

He then leaned back and chuckled, afterwards order-

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ing a sumptuous banquet to celebrate, outwardly, the fortune of having obtained so enviable a governor for the Como country, and, inwardly, the success of his own statesmanship.

However shocking was his life in other respects, Gian possessed one virtue: the virtue of promptness. Whenever he undertook to do a thing he went immediately at it, therefore, with his cavaliers, was ahead of the messenger. Toward afternoon, hearing a galloping horse, they drew aside and waited, whereupon the Duke's man rode into their midst and, being ignorant of his master's treachery, spoke out concerning his mission. The Corsair, now the rightful governor, demanded the letter, read it, and handed it to his cavaliers, then sat upon a stone and laughed. They, in turn, rolled upon the ground in an ecstasy of mirth. When finally this had moderated the young man wrote the following:

"*The Duke of Milan:*

Your Excellency's commands have just reached me on the roadside where I am stopping to breathe my beasts, and what your Excellency desires shall be carried out as nearly as compatible with the new governor's comfort. Attention shall be given to the continued welfare of the Musso Campo Santo, in which prosperity it is hoped the Duke of Milan will assist by a protracted visit. Commend the messenger for his unerring dispatch.

GIAN, Governor of Musso."

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"chimes of near and distant bells"

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Then they laughed afresh and bade the man turn back, but Gian called after him, saying:

"Fellow, see that the letter is put into the Duke's hand by the one you hate most in all Milan, then do you hasten and join my army at Musso. Heed well what I say," he laughed, "for 'tis the best service and advice I can render you!"

The castle cemetery prospered for several days thereafter, and when Gian had killed everybody worth while he set about gathering an army. It was a motley crowd, but with it he marched upon the Switzers, recaptured the Vatelline valley, and sent such impertinent messages to Milan that the Duke set out with a large army to avenge his honor.

It was the result of this that brought about the naval engagement on Como, when seven battleships of forty-eight oars each, built by the Duke and launched in an obscure arm of the lake, fought an equal fleet hastily prepared by Gian; and the bishop said tradition has it that the water just off Menaggio point was stained with blood from shore to shore. Little did these galleys resemble the present day push-oar boats filled with corn and smiling faces!

Fortune finally turned her face from your favorite devil, but not before he had so thoroughly terrorized northern Italy that until this day from those mountain peaks float whispers of his prowess.

You must find the site of this bloody castle Musso,

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long ago torn down, for our bishop says that otherwise one does not absorb the full romance of Como. It may help your search to know that the little chapel was left standing—St. Eufemia, he says it was called—on a prominent headland somewhere between Gravedonia and Menaggio. Do find it, so, if I come again, you can point it out to me as the reliquary of those restless spirits who once made that lovely basin a sounding bowl of bitter passions, war and death.

But what does a bishop know of "the full romance of Como!" How could he ever understand the meaning of those days when you came in a trim skiff and rowed me yourself, following the picturesque shore line; sometimes stopping in at nearby villas whose owners had flown, and sometimes—just drifting! He, telling his tales of wicked castles, never dreamed they were recalling the very sweetest day of Como's history—one particular afternoon, not far from sunset, when you floated with me between two castles of our own design: Friendship, in which you dwelt, and Love—my home! It was Sunday, and the heavy peace which that day always breathes to make itself felt lest men forget, lay like a benediction on the lake. No stir was in the air, no motion in the water to distort its clear reflection of the shore; and in this mirror of inverted landscape we named the little towns for people whom we knew—little sleeping towns hanging by their toes, on crystal mountains

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"named the little towns in sight"

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upside down! Over the calm, so soft and saintly with you close by, was borne the chime of near and distant bells from a score of campaniles, standing like good watchful sentinels amidst villages set at random in the crags. And across the face of the still more distant peaks hung a fringe of round, white, puffy clouds, as though uncertain of which way to turn—whether to the deep blue sky above, or the deep blue lake below; pitiful little lost clouds, you said they were, which did not know how to get home!

Then you whispered that these suspended puffs were like the powder smoke of cannon, that instant fired from their entrenchment in the rocks; and so realistic did this seem, so startlingly did it resemble the white smoke of powder which gushes from a battery and stops in mid-air as though dazed by its sudden projection into life, that we found ourselves looking into each other's eyes and waiting, breathless, for the thunderous detonation. At that moment, more than ever before, I relegated all steeple-chases and water jumps to a place where steeples are unknown and water is supposed to be a physical impossibility.

What if we did disagree over the respective merits of our two favorite villas: Charlotta and Pliniana? You were right in arguing the beauties of Charlotta's grounds, its walks and planting, for nowhere else have I seen such wonderful effects. But, on the

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other hand, Pliniana possesses what man cannot create. That mountain torrent which shoots into the air two hundred feet above this spot and dashes almost into the courtyard—each terrified drop seeming to cry out in horror at the unexpected plunge, and each atom flashing myriads of panic-stricken colors—is a sight not to be measured with flowerbeds and tropical plants.

And yet there was another thing you did not see at Pliniana—something which makes it ever a garden spot to me, were it only barren space. This was the afternoon we stood looking into the intermittent spring, when you turned and ran partly up those slippery steps, rising alongside the cataract to a terrace where the wild olives bloomed. Yet, as quickly as you went, you stopped again, almost as though in pain, because you had suddenly remembered that I could not make the climb, and that, as in other things, I must remain for always on a plane beneath you.

Do you think I did not translate the look of infinite pity which crossed your face, or that I was deceived by your bright smile as you came back, gayly laughing now, declaring the spray would make your hair uncurl? You have never been quite willing to admit my affliction, have you, generous one! I used to think that little Orte, with her shy, peaceful way, on whose silvery breast floats that tiny green island with its castle old, was the most beautiful of these

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"shoots into the air, two hundred feet above"

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lakes; but since our day at Pliniana I have yielded to the charm of Como, Lago di Como, where has been unfolded the more alluring beauty of—just you!

The Count has a plan. He came in a while back simply bristling with enthusiasm and, as is the inevitable result with Brentheim's enthusiasms, I at once caught it. An international congress of surgeons meets in Rome month after next, and he has suddenly become interested to the extent that one would think the whole science of medicine depends on that convention.

Something is up his sleeve—I don't know what—but at any rate I've jumped at this chance for a lark with him. So he is out now, inspecting cars and drivers, for we start to-morrow, motoring by a zigzag and carefree course, anywhere and everywhere, with Rome the objective point to be reached by the first of December. Secretly, I think he wants me to consult some of those specialists, pretty big men, too, he says, who will be there. And, secretly, I admit to you that for an hour I have been trembling in a contemplation of wild fancies, picturing myself again made whole by some magic knife thrust; dreaming myself cured—all but the pain about my heart and the hunger of my soul, both of which you, Beloved Physician, can then if you choose make well. Dreams, dreams! What would I do without my dreams!

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We have seen little in Milan—besides dining and flirting at the Cova. I've not even enthused over the cathedral this time, nor shall I ever again, I suppose, because the very first glimpse of it some years ago came on a full moonlight night, which was enough to spoil me forevermore. For then the turrets, pinnacles and two thousand statues rising into the starry heavens, reminded me of some wonderful fairy palace, or a frost picture on a window pane. One does not like having such a fancy disillusioned, and therefore I have never been able to warm up to the place since discovering it is only marble; also for the reason that unromantic daylight shows too plainly how its otherwise pure Gothic is offended by Romanesque windows.

Yet one spot therein holds me chained: a spot under the dome, beneath the crypt, where lies the embalmed body of that most human of saints, that most godly of priests, that most manly of men—Borromeo. I have sometimes thought that this rare personality was helped to greatness because chance had balanced him between two such extraordinary uncles; one a pope, and the other your favorite devil—the Corsair of Como. Not a bad blend to direct the destiny of a rich young nephew!

But, altogether, I have not cared for Milan, and rarely went even to see my old favorites in the Brera. You will pardon me for suggesting that the reason

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for this may be found at present some thirty-five miles to the north of us, living—and I hope eating three good meals a day—under the eastern slope of Monte Olimpino.

Good-night, Polly.

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III

MILAN TO PARMA

YOUR letter, which came just before we left today, has made me serious. Do you not suppose that I, too, have known all along I should not be making love to you? Of course I realized the fallacy of it where you were concerned, and yet did it because —well, because I couldn't help it, Polly. Perhaps it was your tender interest and encouragement in what surgery may do, intermixed with the most delicate of suggestions: "if they should cure your poor body I would so thank God that your heart could never ache again." But I shall ask for no explanations, since you so command, and will henceforth write exclusively of our journey—especially as you and your mother are contemplating a similar trip in the spring. Brentheim and I therefore will be the royal pathfinders to Your Tyrannical Highness and the Beloved Dowager. How does that look! Yet I warn you that if the days are rainy or the trip wearisome, there shall be some moments when this pen will assert itself.

I knew of a fellow once who wouldn't write what his pen wanted to say, so it turned up and stuck him

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"and details of the door"

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in the eye. You would not have me meet such a fate as that, would you, Polly? But I shall attend closely to my knitting and not break rules unless I see the point coming straight at me—then, of course, you will forgive some slight relapse, just to save my sight.

Our run to Parma was over a longer route because of a detour by way of Certosa di Pavia; that monastery of startling beauty—a mute but convincing evidence pointing back to the dead splendors of the Milan dynasties. While this magnificent structure should not be passed, I must advise you to get an early start, since the entire run of 165 kilometers leaves little time for sightseeing.

The monastery, by the way, was begun under Giovanni Galaezzo Visconti, because of a vow made to his wife; and as he is the same man who started the Milan cathedral, who left his marble quarries in perpetuity to that chapter for its completion, also a direct ancestor of the Visconti in whose villa you took me on Como, I at once felt a personal interest in the place, and especially lingered beneath a ceiling fresco representing him holding up the original model of the church, wherein he truly looks like a fine old gentleman who would never split hairs on any matter of honor—much less a promise to his beautiful Catherine.

The first breath of country from an automobile is delightfully refreshing after a period of Milan's con-

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gested streets. The roads are good—nothing very extra, but good—and one's eyes are feasted with a landscape which constantly smiles in placid contentment. Bright colors both in dress and cheeks, quick flashes of white teeth and a genial response to the tourist's waving hand, add a touch of warmth that can only be matched by the glow of a rose-shedding sun.

And the *borgos,* or little villages, what a collection they are! Built close upon the roadside, built of stone and planned by the architect of least resistance, they resemble—and in very truth are—human warrens, whose inhabitants on catching the first sound of a purring motor, thrust surprised or laughing faces from every aperture, indicating by a natural self-complaisance that these huts are the epitome of comforts from which you or I would flee in mortal horror.

It was just after leaving a small group of this sort that we espied a priest in the road waving us to wait. The chauffeur, religiously crossing himself as he had done on each previous occasion when we passed a priest, came to a stop, whereupon the good man, somewhat out of breath, asked if we could take him to the next town where a woman lay in the agony of death. Of course we did, and on the way he told how Catherine came to exact that promise from her husband.

She was traveling from Milan to Pavia—over this selfsame road—when brigands seized the horses,

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killed the postillions and dragged her away toward their stronghold. A mile in the forest they halted and she, seeing a shrine to the Madonna, threw herself before it imploring the Virgin's protection. It so happened that while she prayed a storm gathered and, to the amazement of all, the image spoke, whereat the sky burst with a mighty lightning bolt that killed every bandit but one, who fell upon his face confessing the miracle. With his help Catherine caught two horses and rode to Milan, telling her husband the remarkable story which the penitent robber verified in each detail.

The Duke, grateful for his beautiful wife's escape, took a vow that he would grant any one wish she made, and she, remembering the blessed voice that had charged her to commemorate the spot of her deliverance, asked him to build where the shrine stood the most beautiful church in Lombardy. And so it came about. Whether the reverend father had his facts from history, or up his sleeve to repay us for the ride, I do not know; but he seemed convincing.

The church, with its great façade and details of the door that we went especially to see—said unquestionably to be the finest early Renaissance decorative work in Northern Italy—looked from the gate no larger than a chicken house, but, as we approached, it seemed to rise out of the ground like a lazy giant getting up to say howdy-do to us, and then—well,

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that façade beggars description! You must go, and will probably come away with a vague impression like my own, of a bold Lombard-Romanesque style of graduated front, interspersed with a touch of almost every antique order of architecture; a young forest of projecting pillars and deep transverse arcades, which frame a more intricate and delicate wealth of ornament than I could think up in a life time. Four really magnificent windows are surmounted by niches, each with a statue, and there seems to be a battalion of them. Medallions of Roman emperors adorn the plinth and above this are reliefs representing biblical and other history, even picturing the scene where Galeazzo's bones were transferred to the monastery.

There is little use in trying to take you through the interior. Facing the nave on either side, and behind iron gates—themselves works of art—are fourteen chapels running to the transepts. Each is done by a master; each contains enough wealth to buy a wagonload of bonds; and the altar alone required one hundred and one years of constant work by an entire family, its heirs and assigns to complete. Here first is a heavy marble balustrade so inlaid with amethyst, lapus lazuli, red coral, verde antique, jade, jasper, serpentine, malachite, agate and corundum, that, considering the price of admission, we felt positively ashamed to look at it with more than one eye at a time; and if heaven is as elaborately paved with pre-

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"the promenade for Parvian sweethearts these past six hundred years"

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cious stones as the floor from this rail back, I can only prophesy that some of the best of us are pretty apt to get in the celestial jail. I could scarcely succeed in walking over it day after day without picking out just one little piece! Even the choir stalls are inlaid with a nicety and skill that makes my fine Buhl desk at home look like a half-worked jig-saw puzzle.

Not far from the gates, at the Cartusian well, stood the only living descendant of this industrious family. She had left the roadside where several other women were washing clothes, and was filling a pail with water. Even in her poverty something about her seemed to say that here was a proud and haughty personage—although she posed readily enough when the Count's persuasive voice began to work its charm.

Soloro has a monument in this church to Beatrice Sforza, and I mention it not for any exceptional beauty of the work, but for a rather interesting epoch in his life. When Michael Angelo placed his Pieta in St. Peter's at Rome, so many persons proclaimed it to be from this Lombardian's chisel, and so persistently did the belief spread, that Michael Angelo was finally compelled to carve in his own signature to convince the art public—which, indeed, must have been very indulgent toward Soloro or unjustly critical of the Florentine.

From here drop down to Pavia, six kilometers, and I would like more time to speak about this quaint

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capital of towers and churches. Of all the Lombard cities, it was at one period the most religious, or the most church-ridden, of any in Italy, there having existed one hundred and sixty-five places of worship when its population was not a fifth the present size. A particular one of these still in evidence gives the casual observer some idea of the difficulty builders had to find places for their edifices, because it is a chapel standing in the middle of a bridge—the covered bridge, that has been the promenade for Pavian sweethearts these past six hundred years. The view from here along the river banks looks like a perpetual wash day, since each grassy slope is spread with lingerie enough to supply—but really, my limited idea of lingerie forbids comparisons!

Perhaps the most impressive thing in Pavia is that exquisite monument—exquisite in sentiment as well as in execution—to the Cairoli family: a life-sized group of six; the mother, Adelaide, her five sons who died in the battle of independence for Italy, and, on the shaft behind these, a medallion of the father. She is represented giving the flag to her sons and the work is more to perpetuate the great unselfishness of motherhood than for the subsequent deeds of soldiery in her boys. Garibaldi once said of her, and there was a deep sigh of loving comfort in his voice: "Italy has its Adelaide Cairoli!" In this thought he seemed content for the destiny of his country.

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"Italy has its Cairoli!"

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While taking the photograph Brentheim found that no one can point a kodak in Italy without having crowds flock before the lens, and yet in reality this sometimes turns out more interesting results than otherwise.

Following the road east through Borghetto, you will doubtless lunch at Lodi—that is, you will stop at Lodi for lunch. The hotel has been jocularly named "del Sune," because the sun never shines in it, I suppose. I think it's ashamed to. The dining-room ceiling seems to be purposely low in order that everyone may touch its ancient frescoes of cobwebs, and there being only a bare floor beneath, the din of this place is alarming. Altogether the meal didn't leave a happy memory. We were interested to see two Italian officers across from us carefully wipe each piece of china, silverware and cutlery at their places with the table cloth, but remembering that a hint to the wise is sufficient, we followed their example and the result entirely justified our seeming rudeness. A woman with a long black plume hanging to her shoulder, smiled at her cigarette when she caught us at this, but to everyone else it seemed quite the natural thing.

I believe there exists no more perfect automaton than the waiter in an Italian hotel. For years he has been serving things just so, and any change in the order of menu seems a sacrilege in his eyes. For

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instance, often I want a large cup of coffee with my dinner. But can I get it? No! I beg for it, bribe for it, threaten for it to no avail. The waiters listen respectfully, then congregate near the door and discuss me in whispers, look suspiciously in my direction, and finally shrug their shoulders. When they do this last, I know all hope for my coffee is lost, and indeed it's as near as I've come to getting it en route, instead of having it poked at me in a steaming thimble when time to go. Leaving Lodi is very much like stepping out of a dentist's chair; one part, at least, of life's agony is over.

Every visible thing seems to be for sale in Lodi, and if you don't buy these, other things are fished out of dusty garrets and offered. The people go to so much trouble for this, and do it with such a gracious air, that I found myself apologizing most profusely because I had no immediate use for an antique cradle; and just as we were starting, a bent old woman pushed through the crowd holding up a live hen, nicely wrapped in newspaper with just its terrified head sticking out. Of all things to sell a motorist! A live hen! She might have pleased us as much by offering a neatly done up puncture! Between these bursts of spasmodic activity, the city sleeps.

There is nothing attractive in the cathedral, but the church of the Incoronata, finished the year after

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"view from the bridge looks like a perpetual wash-day"

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Columbus discovered us, is mildly interesting for its organ gallery and choir stalls. The most appealing thing to me about this town is that here on that memorable morning of May 10th, 1796, Napoleon stormed the bridge over the Odda. If only he had stormed Lodi!

The road southeastward passes through a series of little towns, the largest being Casalpusterlengo. Of its few thousand inhabitants more than half are in some way interested in the manufacture of cheese, and although the municipal atmosphere is not pleasant, the product is. Here Brentheim and I stopped long enough to take on board a five-pound Parmesan, a bottle of wine and six large rolls, and while cutting down the seventeen kilometers to Piacenza, diligently filled the crevices left by the Lodi table d'hôte.

I think we must have been almost asleep when this interesting place came into view—smaller to-day, indeed, by one, because a counsellor was being buried. It was a splendid funeral! Our motor couldn't get through the crush in the cathedral square, for we happened along while the service was in progress, so waited with bared heads to watch it. I like that custom in Europe of baring the head whenever any funeral bier comes by.

The hearse in this case was a huge affair, about fifteen feet high and with enough carving to make a public fountain. It was drawn by four black

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horses hooded and shrouded in red satin, each led by a black robed groom. Four white reins went up to the box and were handled by a dignitary whom I thought at first glance could be no other than the king himself. His tri-cornered hat, bearing a red cockade and pinned to an elaborately curled white wig, his scarlet satin coat of court cut, his buff breeches, white stockings, and black pumps, were the pink of elegance.

Following this came two carriages for the priests, and after these, the family walked. Then in the center of a thirty foot space glided two nuns, the sisters who had nursed him, mumbling prayers and keeping their faces to the sky. Next a military guard marched with slow and solemn tread. Some little boys and veiled little girls followed, and upon their heels were a half dozen other carriages,—for the aged to occupy? No, for the flowers, that were made into elaborate designs and tied with wide ribbons whereon had been printed mottoes in gold letters. At the very end walked less intimate friends, and perhaps an enemy or two.

Brentheim asked a bystander more of this counsellor, but we could elicit little beyond the fact that he owned several houses. "You mean," said the Count slowly, "that he held a life interest in them!"

"No, no, signor," the man exclaimed, "he owned them."

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"the city sleeps"

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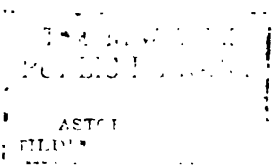

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"Did he take them with him?" the Count politely inquired, whereupon the fellow stared a moment, then walked away, but thoughtful.

It is not the cathedral where the funeral was held that you should visit, but the smaller church of San Disto, for which Raphael painted the Sistine Madonna. That wonderful canvas, now in the Dresden gallery, hung here for over two hundred years, from the day Raphael finished it in 1515, until Augustus III of Poland came through and bought it from the church for about $45,000. The copy made to take its place is good, but hangs too high.

From here our run to Parma began on that great military highway constructed one hundred and eighty-seven years before Christ by Marcus Aemilius Lepidus and named the Via Aemilia, going in almost a straight line through to Rimini, there joining the Flaminian Way. It is an excellent road, and the fifty-seven kilometers to Parma went through many pleasing villages each of which offered some beauties tempting us to linger. The dreamy-eyed girls and boys looked up with mild surprise, while we in turn wondered if those poetic countenances would have half fulfilled their promises had we remained. They are the toilers of this extensive plain, whose fertile acres are intersected every hundred yards or less by rows of mulberry trees, planted in a straight line run-

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ning back from the road and festooned together by grape vines which seem heavy enough to have been yielding fruit for generations.

Thus it is that the Italian peasant economizes space. Between the trees he gathers a harvest of grapes, between the rows of the trees he plants a crop of vegetables or fodder grass, and on the leaves of the trees themselves, he raises silk worms. Nothing is wasted by the Italian peasant, not even soap.

It was nearly sundown before we saw the towers of Parma rising out of the southeast, and almost dark when the city gate guards stopped us for inspection. I think I shall like Parma, though as yet it is too soon to be sure. So far, the atmosphere is delightfully mediæval, and our hotel—a most excellent one—bears every sign of having stood a hundred sieges. Its proprietor, with genial formality, appeared at our rooms shortly before dinner bearing a large wooden tray on which were two trout and a pheasant. These—since we were not taking the regular table d'hôte—were his choice for us, and he craved our inspection and approval before sending them to the chef. He received our approval then and, more particularly so, later on. Indeed, the hotel d'Italia is much like a singed cat—having infinitely better qualities inside than appear from without.

Good-night, dear Polly. There is something else I want to write, but—well, good-night.

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"festooned together with grape vines"

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IV

PARMA

FROM the City Hall with its quaint sun dials, to the river that washes its skirts, Parma is all I had hoped of it. Even though the name first impressed me as being peculiarly soft and sweet, I did not at once associate it with the violet. Yet, here is the home of that exquisite flower, and here the delicate perfumery, matched only by the fragrance of your hair, is carefully prepared. Here too, is the home of Correggio; for in this sunny town, foremost of its class in bright home life and cheery residences, lying in one of the most fertile plains of Italy, and guarded by the two great ranges of Alps and Apennines, the famous painter found life and death. Perhaps nowhere in all Europe can he be studied as well as in his native place, for surely it is in Parma, if anywhere, that he ranks with Raphael, Tintoretto, or any of the decorative masters whose brushes have survived the mould of ages; since in Parma are clustered the greatest of his works, both in number and perfection. And yet in his entirety I cannot really place him among the masters, whatever avalanche of criticism may be loosed to the contrary notwithstand-

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ing. Just so far as he followed his naturally endowed conception of saints and angels, giving them that fullness of sensuous joy, portraying them in an environment of flooding sunlight and carefree happiness, he reached a height where few have followed and none excelled. But alas for Correggio, in the tragic phases of life he sometimes nears the borderland of grotesque! His brush failed utterly when picturing the Madonna's torture, and he leaves the sainted woman bending above the figure of her dead son more to be pitied for her features than for her grief. And perhaps it was this knowledge of his own shortcomings in the portrayal of serious things that caused him to shirk the responsibility in the Fates, for instead of making these a grave trio who weigh the destinies of men, he created three hilarious young Bacchantes whose most studious occupation is in kicking up and waving flowers. However, let us think only of his best works because for these, indeed, he is loved.

A few decades ago, when the artistic world shuddered at the news that these had succumbed to a mould which oozed through the giant church walls, all eyes turned in thanksgiving to the long since dead Paoli Toschi, whose fame now sprang up in a night as Correggio's savior. Not that Toschi had been unknown, but in a more modest way. He it was who spent thirty-four years up in the church's vault d arches,

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"City Hall, with its quaint sun dials"

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studying from the top of dizzy scaffolding these ancient frescoes and making water color copies which he afterward transposed to bronze. He died at it, and while the results of his labors were reverently placed in the Parma museum, few went to study them while the originals remained. But only a scare, after all, was this rumor of mould, since in later years another inspection showed that cobwebs and incense smoke had been the dimming cause. My impression is that Toschi is sinking again into obscurity, but at any rate, he achieved one burst of posthumous glory —a small reward for the work of a lifetime.

One is almost impelled into the conceit that through all those thirty-four years of close communion with the angelic figures he must have come to know them well and talk with them, and share a wee bit of their understanding. Why, then, could not the local superstition be true: that in those ten thousand days of intimate study they whispered a way for him to revisit this earth in spirit form! And if he did, and beheld his own great works being neglected in the dim lit museum, what more natural than to come in the night and smear cobwebs on Correggio's frescoes in order to direct the world's attention to his own? You smile but I am serious. And the cobwebs might have remained forever had not Correggio's spirit itself awakened to the trick and put a stop to it. In Parma it is not so dif-

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ficult a matter to believe in spirits—good or bad—for surely where there has been so much early strife, there ought to be ghosts in plenty.

The most vital penchant of the Parmaese seems to have been—and still is—assassinations. Like volcanoes, or elephants, it breaks out just every so often and simply has to raise Ned before going back to a docile state. And the same taste has applied to wars. Heaven knows how many fights this little place had during its prehistoric existence (for there was a prehistoric existence, signs having been found by Marcus Aemilius nearly two centuries before Christ, of a lake village built during the bronze period). Later, it went through slaughter enough to please the most exacting, beginning, as a sort of curtain raiser, with a brilliant resistance to the attacks of the Aigurians, and when emerging triumphantly from this, to be totally destroyed by Mark Anthony because it happened to be the birthplace of Cassius. There is an instance of friendship for you: Anthony so loving Cæsar that he would march an army hundreds of miles to destroy the birthplace of his dead friend's murderer! After this Augustus built it up, but every now and then until the twelfth century some fellow came along and again knocked it into a cocked hat.

There followed, of course, other centuries of vicissitudes, throughout all of which it took an active,

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"to the river that washes its skirts"

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and frequently a very leading, part in the destiny both of state and church. A tradition is related here of how it was a Parma nobleman, Gillotti, who instigated the notorious trial of Pope Formosus three months after His Holiness had died—but as this paradox seems an outrage on integrity I must explain.

About the ninth century, when Italy was without an imperial head and in danger of falling asunder, the wise Formosus invited Arnulf, King of Germany, to visit Rome and be crowned King. This transpired in spite of a strong protest by the opposition whose leader was Gillotti.

The King's return to Germany, and the untimely death of Formosus, so weakened the imperial cause that the other party sprang into control. They first crowned one of their own men, Boniface VI, pope, then—with a view to dealing the imperialists a death blow—he was told to summon the dead Formosus to appear before a tribunal and defend himself against the trumped-up accusation of selling Italy to the Germans.

Accordingly, after having lain in the ground some three months, the body was exhumed, dressed in fresh pontifical robes and brought into court. A lawyer was assigned to defend him, and the living pope acted as prosecuting attorney. The whole spectacle was grotesque, heinous and horribly vulgar,

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and resulted in the cadaver being found guilty. Thereupon the three fingers of his right hand, with which he had given the pontifical blessing during life, were cut off and his body, after being dragged through the streets, was cast into the Tiber.

There were doubtless many in Rome who could have thought out such a hideous exhibition as this, but it certainly seemed a natural product of the Parmian mind in those days.

To-day, however, this town is one of Italy's sunniest children, offering friendly hospitality to all who ask her shelter. Only in case no letter comes from you to-morrow do I fear for any sign of further violence, and depending upon this may or may not be written how a disappointed American gentleman tore the postmaster limb from limb.

Its environs are of particular interest, and not far beyond the wall stands castle San Vitale, owned by a gentleman of that name whose mother was the daughter of Marie Louise, second wife of Napoleon. It was here the empress lived for awhile after refusing to return to Napoleon, saying that she preferred for their son the duchy of Parma to the throne of France; but at that time the little King of Rome had already been installed in the imperial palace at Vienna, so if he himself ever lived in San Vitale I do not know. Nevertheless, the shade of his royal presence is not required to enrich those old walls, which could tell

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"and its castellated walls"

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tales to make the Arabian Nights sound like an essay on morals.

While looking for this interesting place we stumbled upon the castle Mangelli, another huge affair, which of the two is much more picturesque. Its story also is spotted with blood of the middle ages, and its vine shrouded gate and its castellated walls need no historian.

In many respects the huge, five-storied, octagonal marble Baptistery, embellished with a series of medallions and adorned by all types of scriptural subjects and animals of symbolic import, is the most interesting thing here. It stands directly opposite the cathedral in the Piazza del Duomo and was started by Anetlami in 1196. Within, instead of eight, there are sixteen walls, two galleries and graceful wall columns, but all of the sculptures have not been completed—and in this uncompleted class is an excellent series of reliefs representing the months, begun in the thirteenth century. Your birth month is by far the greatest of these.

Before we left, there came a humble family with one of the women carrying upon a pillow a very young infant. A white veil had been tucked around her neck and this fell over the child and pillow almost to the floor. I wonder why it is that women are so much more composed than men in situations of this kind? For the men were awkward and em-

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barrassed almost to the verge of fleeing. Especially was this so of the sickly young father, and I fell to wondering if he were not oppressed by the responsibility; for a man who tosses a piece of human flesh into the mart, to fight and trade for its existence through three score years and ten, must feel sure that he has given it an heritage of clean blood and a healthy mind, or know that he is committing an unforgivable sin.

The priest arrived a minute late but hurriedly brought out some white vestments from a box beneath one of the pews, donned them before us all, and proceeded to save the child's soul. I could not help noticing that the little party entered and left by the door embellished with an allegory of Death, from the story of Barlaam and Josaphat. But they were all unconscious of this.

The priest afterwards told me that, since the consecration of this building, every child born in Parma had been baptized there. The entire population for almost seven hundred years of a place that now has over fifty thousand inhabitants! Just think of the souls congregated somewhere! When mine is turned loose—after yours has gone—without the slightest irresolution it can walk directly to you in all that crowd, never once having to stop some angel policeman and inquire: "Can you tell me where Miss Polly lives?"

The cathedral, dating from the eleventh century

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"with its vine covered gate"

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and requiring three hundred years to finish, is a fine example of Lombard-Romanesque. Cruciform in style and covered by an imposing dome, it easily claims the center of attraction. Guarding each portal are two enormous red marble lions, and the Renaissance doors seem to possess enough strength to resist an army equal in number to the beggars which frequent its steps. Within the church its massive grandeur is so skillfully proportioned that one does not realize he could hardly shoot an arrow to the ceiling. The wide nave and two aisles are divided by fourteen enormous piers and above these runs a splendid triforium. Gombora of Brescia painted the vaulting above the nave in the sixteenth century, but the gorgeous Assumption in the octagonal dome is Correggio's work, requiring four years to complete.

I left Brentheim at the door with his picture taking and went slowly in to hear the high mass being sung —for this is All Saints' Day. The church had been decorated for the holy festival, and each huge column was draped with red satin hangings. Women were kneeling on the cold stone floor without any regard for precision—seeming, indeed, as though they might have been variously stricken with paralysis of the knees, and dropped while on their way to other duties, rather than paying tribute to the Saints. A bishop was conducting the service assisted by perhaps

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thirty priests and acolytes. There was a full choir, and a man at the organ who knew his instrument sent its deep chords rushing to the dim lit vaulted space above, there to burst and sprinkle back upon our heads with trembling melancholy.

With that callousness which breeds so quickly in the breasts of tourists, I crowded forward to see it all, but my crutches were a hindrance and it was really on the outskirts of the worshipers that I stopped. Then suddenly something hot and wet fell upon my hand, and turning I found myself looking at one of the most beautiful middle class Italian types I have ever beheld—so wonderfully beautiful, indeed, that in reverence I drew slightly back. She was standing like a stoic, though her head rested lightly against the red draped pier, thus giving a background for her delicate profile that was not easy to resist. She did not kneel, or cross herself, or even deign to murmur prayers, but stood transfixed by a grief too deep for this; with face and eyes raised to the dome, where the angels in Correggio's assumption seemed on the verge of leaving their places and sailing off into the outside sky. No other emotion did she exhibit, except by the dumb eloquence of slow and silent tears which welled into her eyes to roll, big and crystal-like, down her perfectly moulded olive cheeks. It was one of those tears that had fallen upon my hand.

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She did not notice me at all, for she herself was not there. The splendor of the service, with its tinsel and shallow pomp, had left me unmoved; but this tear, heated in the crucible of exquisite grief, dignified by the purity of her face and filtered through the vision of what she saw far beyond the dome, made me leave the place feeling that in very truth I had been touched with holy water.

To-night, standing in the door of our little hotel with the proprietor, this girl passed and gave him a cheery nod.

"A pretty girl," I remarked.

"Yes," he smiled, adding something.

"I cannot believe it!" I exclaimed.

"Oh, signor," he quietly said, "she is well known."

Beginning now to understand something of the grief her heart was whispering to the angels in the dome, I slowly raised my hand to the light. You, purest of the pure, may be surprised to know it showed no scarlet mark, but instead, I fancied that the spot shone whiter where her tear had touched. If there is a religion anywhere on earth that I can ever grasp it will be one like this I saw to-day; which has churches where such as these may freely go without causing the congregation to draw aside, and otherwise push a pitiful creature still farther into the hell of her existence.

The gray, castle-like atmosphere of our hotel must

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be getting into my brain, and it is time to stop. Perhaps I should have stopped before, were it not that you, so tender to those who grieve, will understand. Were there no other charm about you for me to love, that great comprehension and boundless charity would be enough to keep me—oh, this pen! Goodnight, dear Polly.

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V

PARMA TO BOLOGNA

TO-DAY we came from Parma to Bologna, a nice easy run of ninety kilometers, keeping south-east down the fertile plain north of the Apennines, and drawing slowly in to their protecting slopes. All things smile in this part of Italy. The girls work in the fields as though it were the most humorous occupation extant, and I imagine that even the silk worms emerge from cocoons by mirthful convolutions of their little bodies.

Reggio is the first place of any note to hold attention, and is quaint, but poor—oh, so poor! There is a pathetic display of pretense in the breadth of its streets; a sort of run-down aristocracy effect, which makes one feel like walking through it on tip-toe. But of course it has its statue of Garibaldi, its carved red lions before the churches and its multitudes of children. I can imagine no town in Italy being too poor for all of these.

I noticed what indeed is characteristic of Italy the farther south we go, but more particularly here, that people are inclined to avert their eyes from any one on crutches. At first my admiration was fired by

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this mark of extreme delicacy, until learning that it came from the inherent habit of avoiding cripples. Once a child sprang quickly aside, pointing her first and little finger at me to keep off the "evil eye"—and was charmingly puzzled when I gave her a franc.

But were I ever compelled to attend services in the churches of this country, it is here I should remain and choose the Madonna della Ghiera; not alone because of its classic Greek cross design, but because I should be continually entertained by the picture gallery on its ceiling.

It is much smaller than the cathedral, but most restful in the beauty of its proportions. The work of several good artists is in evidence, and to my mind that of Ferrari in the nave, extending as far as the dome, is the most impressive of its kind I have ever seen. The largest piece represents the crowning of Mary, but a smaller and adjoining panel (although the figures must be fifteen feet in length) of the archangel casting the devil out of Paradise, is the one which commands admiration. Really, when I first looked up, that devil seemed so truly to be diving down right on top of me, that I made my crutches fly. It has a nameless fascination which cannot be described short of masterful.

Much love and value is bestowed on a Madonna by Orsi, over the right transept, which is kept behind a

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"work in the fields as though it were the most humorous occupation extant"

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heavy gold and silver door that slides up and down by machinery, but it cannot hold a candle to my devil for life-likeness. Nor can you say this is because of my greater familiarity with the one, for remember, please, that I know you!

I could not help feeling a bit ashamed when the sexton, anticipating his paltry franc piece, turned another crank, and lo! the five huge silver lamps suspended from the ceiling came gliding earthward. As they came, they grew in size, until the center one looked as large as a coach. Those who knelt and worshiped at this altar (for being All Souls' Day there were many at prayer) seemed not at all disturbed, so my consideration for them began to lag —especially when I discovered some of the women following me with their eyes as though I were a curiosity, but never once stopping the movements of their lips. They were praying right along in a sort of a go-as-you-please style, with just so much to be finished before supper time—yet not missing any of the sights. If I were the Lord and someone stopped me in the midst of everything to listen to her troubles, she would either have to show a good deal more animation or get utterly snubbed. There are few things in this world more exasperating than to have a person begin a tale of woe by talking it out of the window, and I imagine that the Great Listener of prayers sometimes gets mightily bored. As far as I could

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discover, these lamps are remarkable for three things; length, breadth and thickness.

From the appearance of the cathedral, about two hundred years older than this church, it might have been put together with a blow gun rather than with the skill of human hands. Much as some people praise it, I must admit to you that it seems more like a denatured apology for an almshouse. There are, however, just over the main entrance two recumbent statues of Adam and Eve, and these, unintentionally, are masterpieces of humor; for while she pensively holds out the apple he, in a reclining attitude, is running his fingers through his beard and looking off at the tree tops, as though nonchalantly considering. Pokey old dog!

But Modena! Ah, there's a place that will do your heart good, if for no other reason than being out of Reggio! Its city gate lies twenty-five kilometers farther along, just across the Rubiera, and here Brutus was besieged by Anthony for the assassination of Cæsar. Here, too, the grasping hand of Countess Matilda was felt in the middle ages, when she owned it in her merriest days—but I find nothing about any emperors walking around the walls on their knees to do her penance, as did Henry IV three times around her castle at Carassa, near by. Not that they wouldn't have! Here again the Guelphs and Ghibellines (I'm always wanting to write Gug-

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"in a reclining attitude, as though nonchalantly considering"

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genheims) opened their feud for a series of bloody fights; but enough of Modena's history!

By motor down the Via Aemilia one first sees its lofty campanile, classed among the four finest in northern Italy, but in this particular case its 335 foot height is perceptibly out of plumb, leaning over toward the cathedral, which, as though affected by the attention, leans toward it. And I have never beheld such a crooked conglomeration of ancient stones as this cathedral! True enough, the interior has been recently restored, and when the outside is restored they may have a respectable looking church of it.

Do not think I am unduly one-sided in matters of this sort! The cathedral is all right, I guess, because the usual stone lions, carved by a third rate sculptor with delirium tremens, are standing, sitting and frolicking about each side of the door; while there is also quite a den of smaller ones inside, with a rather scattered family of dwarf men who act as bases and caps for the thirty slender columns which support an unusually high crypt. Altogether, the mildewed old quarry is interesting; but so are tombs and caves and morgues—though not calculated to arouse much enthusiasm as places in which to worship God.

With the aid of two stalwart helpers I determined to climb the campanile—yes, determined and did—and was amply repaid for the labor. The country is very flat thereabouts so my view was uninterrupted

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for twenty miles. Nowhere can one gaze on a more peaceful scene than over this plain between the Alps and Apennines. The long and regularly divided avenues of stumpy mulberry trees, with their graceful festoons of grape vines swinging in almost endless parallel lines across the most refreshing carpet of green pastures, is payment in plenty for the arduous ascent.

On the way down, and at a landing near the ground, the keeper stopped and sent my assistants below, then inserted two huge keys in an iron door, swung it open, and stood back for me to enter. Within, there seemed to be nothing but a cell-like room lighted by a narrow barred window, through which no one—much less myself—could possibly escape. Therefore, I turned to this man, and found him regarding me with so malignant a look which said as plainly as words, "Now I've got you!" that I made ready to brain him with my crutch, thus adding in a modest way to the savory reputation of Modena.

But he was not malignant; he was only waiting for my eyes to look upon the bucket, and anticipating the raptures into which I should go. For suspended from the ceiling by a rusting chain hung a bucket, an in-the-well variety, with all the property marks except moss. It was the bucket these Modenese had captured from the Bolognese at the battle of Rapolino in 1825—and they're keeping it yet, under

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"There's a place that will do your heart good!"

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double locks in the tower! Two hundred years after this battle the poet Allessandro Tassoni wrote "Le Secchia Rapita" and, because it was such a humorous poem, still a hundred years later the city put up a statue to his memory in the Piazza della Torre—just under the campanile. But I do not mean to infer that it took the Modenese a hundred years to appreciate its humor.

It seemed to me that if he wrote anything at all about the little old bucket, it could not miss being funny—the situation would warrant nothing else—so I drove to the library to read for myself, and then saw the joke: this poem is eight cantos in length and covers 400 pages! Our American bucket has only one verse and a chorus—at least, that's all I ever heard—which in truth can be made amusing enough when a male quartette draws in its heads to dwell upon a "barber-shop minor" at two A. M.; but four hundred pages of "Le Secchia Rapita"! *Per amor del cielo!*

Yet there are more wonderful things in Modena than its bucket, even though by so saying I risk the wrath of its citizens. At the museum my eyes fell upon a dusty object tucked back in the shelves; a thing half human, half fish—truly a mermaid, but mummified and only about twelve inches long. Its number was 65, so I called for a catalogue and then whistled up the Count.

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The custodian was most apologetic. "Sorry," he answered us, "but people so seldom ask for catalogues! There have been some, oh, yes, but a few years ago the mice built in them!"

However, we were not to be put off in this way. Here was a reputable museum, accommodating a library of 90,000 volumes, besides 3,000 manuscripts (about the number I've had returned with thanks); an art gallery and in fact everything worth keeping; so we were more than ever determined to unearth this human-fish enigma or expose the institution. Finally the director himself appeared, a most cordial gentleman, who took us in his private office and sent an attendant to fetch the thing from its case.

Although I held it in my hands, its gruesome charm is impossible to describe. While mummified as I have said, its head, forehead, nose, lips and chin were in appearance unmistakably human; the teeth, however, varying as to number—there being but twenty in all. The eyes also were larger than the human eye in proportion to its face, and the ears, while humanly molded, were set a trifle higher on the head. This head was about the size of a small apple. The neck was very slender, tapering to a lead pencil size—but one must remember how it had dried up. The shoulders were good, but sloping and from these grew two long arms, about eight inches in all, with properly jointed elbows, wrists, long fingered hands

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"no town in Italy is too poor for these"

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and long nails. The trunk, which showed nine ribs on a side, blended to the body of a fish with a back fin and regularly shaped tail.

Brentheim and I marveled. The superintendent had never seen this piece—perhaps he had not been there long—and his rising interest took shape in a search among old records, with the result that he found filed under number 65 these facts, dating prior to 1840: M. Dobian, of a French society, had been present when it was taken from the sea, and, the incident having created some comment in those days, a Reverend Phillip, member of the Association of Missionaries, wrote an unsolicited letter from the Cape of Good Hope, saying that during a trip through the Orient he had not infrequently seen these "very shy creatures" sunning themselves on rocks in the Chinese sea. Another writer stated that, some sixty years before, a Chinese fisherman succeeded in catching one, afterwards selling it to a Spaniard who in turn sold it to the British Museum for 5000 piasters. It was the first, so far as is known, ever taken into captivity, and this one is the second. So ran the documents.

My eyes are good, but I could discover no trace of hoax. Either the Frenchman and the reverend missionary had been taking something for chills, and the other writer was just plain lying, or my eyes have beheld a valid reason for the mermaid of mythology, if not the mermaid herself.

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This was by all odds the most remarkable thing in the museum. The most beautiful was Giovanni Capelli's "Slave Girl," a statue I should love to take home with me; and the most pathetic was a picture I looked upon from one of the upper windows—a living picture wherein thirty old men of the city poorhouse were playing bowls in the court below.

A trip to the museum is well repaid by these three things alone. And yet the men were not in such a sorry plight! Their cracked voices laughed in the falsetto of the seventh age which seemed to feel no care beyond that of the balls going wrong. There is not a single one of these octogenarians, dependent as he is on the city's bounty, with whom I could not exchange lives and beat him in the trade for happiness! Oh, Polly, you were very near me in Modena!

The streets, flanked by arcades, under which there is almost every description of shop, reminded me of Constantinople. Do you remember the winter I saw you there, and that curious street through which we passed when you were first introduced to the Constantinople dog? When you pitied it, and bought it food, and patted it, and then threw away your gloves? I believe I told you then how much I should like to be a dog, and you made the encouraging suggestion that I might grow.

What a month of it we had there, didn't we? For

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"dash up to the city gates like a pack of wolves"

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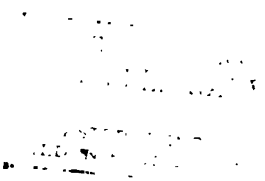

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thirty days what love I made to you!—and I would be doing so yet if that wretched horse hadn't fallen. Ah, well! Homeless dogs are not so much to be pitied, for, after all, they are only homeless dogs.

Before leaving Modena, go a little out of your way to the church of San Francesco, and see Begarelli's "Descent from the Cross" in terra cotta—that form of sculpturing in which this city began to excel with such pronounced success about the fifteenth century. The women in this life-size group of thirteen figures are most appealing, but one especially—the last one on the right—is so like you as you will look in another twenty-six years that I could hardly leave it. If you have any doubts about your future appearance, come here and consider.

After passing Castelfranco, a small town said to be the place where Anthony met defeat by Octavian and Hirtius forty-three years before Christ, no other villages of importance are seen on the twenty-five kilometer run to Bologna. You might find Auzole dell' Emilia worth while, because its people seem to live in bright colors that cannot even match their smiles; but with Bologna's towers just ahead, beckoning us to a savory table d'hôte, we lost interest in the rest of the world, and made quick time to the Ponta Reno, dashing across it and up to the city gates like a pack of wolves.

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Now the table d'hôte is a memory, leaving a seductive languor which the vulgar call drowsiness—unpoetic name for a sense that is most sweet because of its bringing me nearer to sleep, to dreams, and to you. Good-night.

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VI

BOLOGNA

BOLOGNA! Home of the sausage! Does not your mouth water at just the thought of it! I can see your pretty nose turn up in a curve that simply screams "disgusting"—but you have never been quite fair to this relic of menageries.

To-day at luncheon our waiter first pranced up with a dish I did not recognize. It has long been a rule of mine—especially in Italy—that when I do not recognize a dish I wave it by. But rules are sent broadcast before the Bolognese spirit of patriotism. Would I be permitted to refuse this dish? No. He poked it still nearer and gave me a polite look. "No," I said, "not any." He poked it still nearer and his look became troubled. "No," I said again. This time his look was indignant as he exclaimed: "But, signor, it is *mortadella!*" Indeed, we found his persistence quite justifiable.

I could be satisfied to linger here. It is a pleasant mixture of cosmopolitan and mediæval, blending a touch of geniality which adds much to its charm. The people are happier, perhaps it would be best to say more smiling, in Bologna than farther

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north. If one can be reconciled to the incongruity of living in a hotel that was a fifteenth century palace overlooking the solemn tombs of jurists, and then stepping to the corner for a twentieth century electric car, he can steel himself to put up with many other temperamental contradictions to be found in this capital of the Emilia.

But because of its cosmopolitism I shall tell you little. In big places like this there is so much to see, so much to digest, so much to read out of guide books, that—what's the use? My letters are permitted, you have threatened, only so long as I tell an occasional thing which may serve you and the Dowager when you come through next year by motor, and while I do not believe you quite mean this, or would throw it down if you saw me heading toward the tender realms of nothingness, your wish shall, nevertheless, constitute my aim. Should I digress, it will be because my love for you is stronger than myself—an assertion of doubtful value at the present time.

So if you want to know Bologna, read your guide books. Here, you shall have only the more untrodden paths, which, if you follow as I have done, you may be fortunate. For you must know that all I have seen has been discovered by your eyes alone. Many a day has passed since you brought and taught me the things truly beautiful in this world. Great

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"looking out at the tombs of Jurists"

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sculptures, rich paintings, magnificent architecture, are in the well worn paths of every one's progress which those who pass cannot help seeing, but a changing leaf, the sweep of a bird, a child's laugh at the roadside, ah, those are the bounties your hands have poured into my lap! Thousands pass along this way, piled high with perishable treasures, and never dream that they are trampling a masterpiece with every crunch of their bourgeoise boots.

When you come here spend about two days devouring on the American plan the different churches, museums, galleries, library, and other articles of heavy diet; then take a day to wander—just wander along the old arcaded streets, whose porticoes shelter one constantly from sun or rain; pass under the exquisite bronze statue of Gergory XIII, who gave us our calendar, then under the two quaint looking towers locally called the Ass's Ears, leaning towards each other at such fearful angles that their fall seems a matter of seconds; stroll down the Via Orefici, so named because one side is nothing but jewelry shops that cling to the mediæval type of signs—a pigeon, a wheel, an elephant, a hen, and so on through the entire row; hold your breath and take a look into the fish markets strewn about in almost any alleyway; stroll through the Campo Santo, that burying ground for all confessions and formerly a Carthusian Monastery; gaze into the nearby excavations of a forgot-

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ten city on top of which Bologna is built; raise your eyes to an imposing stronghold on the Monte della Guardia, which can be seen from great distances, and then hunt out a secluded bench in the park—and rest. For you will doubtless have traveled many times without knowing it through an authenticated period of over twenty-five centuries. You will have passed, almost within a touch of your hand, Etruscan homes buried perhaps a thousand years before Christ, down to the birthplace of Marconi, in Via della Asse No. 7, opposite San Salvatore church. You will have gone through the Palazza del Re Enzio, where the prison for Enzio, young king of Sardenia, stands. And here I must give you a story told last night by a jolly old lawyer, at a house where Brentheim and I dined.

Emperor Frederick II sent this youngest son into Italy to reinstate Germany's authority in the district of Emilia. The appropriately named pontiff, Innocent IV, then Pope, had excommunicated his majesty, declaring his subjects absolved from fidelity to him, and old Frederick waxed wrath.

So Enzio set out, leading a strong army, and encamped on one side of the nearby Pinare. The Bolognese waited on the other side, and when daylight came the engagement began. The young king, having lost two horses shot from under him, continued fighting desperately on foot but was at last captured. Much rejoicing ensued. The senate de-

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"along the streets with arcades"

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clared it a holiday and ordered the handsome prisoner—for history has it that he was a marvel on looks, with golden hair hanging to his waist—taken to Castlefranco until a proper prison could be made ready. Builders finally having strengthened a suite in some nobleman's palace, proudly offered for the purpose, a great procession formed and waited by the city gates to meet the humbled prince. The senate turned out, priests, lawyers, doctors, merchants, thieves no doubt and everybody. Men forgot their personal grievances, women their jealousies, for at last the German hand had been severed. From Castlefranco marched chosen battalions of the victorious army led by the gallant captain who had made this important capture, dressed in dazzling white. Behind him Enzio rode, shorn of his armor, but handsome—ah, so handsome! Many a maiden sighed as he came by. Placing him in the new prison, the city continued its rejoicing late into the night. His father, hearing of this in due course of time, hurriedly prepared to wipe Bologna off the map, but quite unexpectedly died; and, of course, Enzio's brothers forgot all about him.

So he found himself in the first six months of his imprisonment hopelessly deserted. Then something happened. Right here let me contradict the impression concerning this event that Lucia Viadogala was his solace, and that the present Bentivoglio family trace their origin from this—or perhaps their neigh-

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bors do it for them. Our learned and most charming friend says it is not so; and without giving his authority I shall merely quote the tale.

Leaning one day upon his window bars, gazing down into the busy square, a little round ball suddenly dangled before young Enzio's eyes, which proved to be a note lowered from the roof by several beautiful hairs tied together, hairs as long as were his own, and as black a black as his were golden gold. Imagine his delight when the note charged him to feign illness and ask his guards to send for a renowned doctor in a small German town across the border. This he did, and the authorities, making no objection, despatched a messenger.

Now it so happened that, when approaching a castle three leagues from the border, this messenger was hailed by an old man sitting on the roadside.

"Why such haste?" the ancient inquired.

"I go into Germany," he made reply, "seeking the renowned physician, Gante."

Whereupon the ancient bade him give thanks since the doctor and his assistant were at that moment attending a lady in the castle. Shortly two horsemen appeared in the road—for the whole thing was prearranged to fool the messenger—and explanations having been made, all three set off to Bologna.

It is perhaps unnecessary to explain that the

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"Gregory XIII, who gave us our calendar"

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pseudo doctor was the devoted, yet too indulgent, nurse of a very beautiful orphan girl living near Castlefranco, who, having seen the handsome king the day of his capture, fell madly in love with him. The girl posed as the doctor's assistant.

After an examination of the groaning king, who is said to have acted his part well, the doctor shook its head (I can't say her head, and of course it was not his head), saying that the young assistant would remain to give medicines, and for them to prepare a place for him.

From this time forward the king was what might be termed a chronic invalid. In fact, he never did quite recover during the nineteen years of his incarceration. The authorities subsequently discovered the deception, but by this time had grown so fond of the affable prisoner that it was treated as a huge joke on themselves. Once, in later years, so the Count's friend said, Enzio delicately suggested to the sweet lady a way in which she might bring about his escape, but did she? Not the foxy Bianca! The eternal feminine was too strong! Her mirror was beginning to show too many crowsfeet. She was reasonably sure that while Enzio the prisoner would remain ever Enzio the faithful, Enzio the free might not! Isn't that just like a woman? So he finally died and she went into a convent.

He got off some good things, the Count's friend

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did, and put a new interest into that most sacred of Bolognese traditions surrounding the feast of the Madonna of St. Luca. As this touches St. Sofia in Constantinople where you lost your shoes, I must give it to you. It gives, too, an example of what is lacking in Italian folklore, as you will see.

During the early contests, after Modena had formed a league with Parma and Reggio, Bologna for its defense established a constant guard on the mountain towering near, and there a shrine was built —an image of the Virgin—as protectress and spiritual guardian to the city. So the mountain became known as Monta della Guardia.

In 1087 a Bolognese girl named Angela, just grown and renowned for her beauty, but despising the riches and pleasures of the world, slipped from home and, climbing to the summit of this high mountain, built a stone hut in which she determined to spend her days.

After several weeks of anxious search her father discovered this place, and, though the meeting was not without excitement, he returned alone, having first obtained, however, a promise from the eccentric debutante to let him send up another maiden to keep her company. This second girl was soon converted to Angela's way of viewing life and, as time went on, others numbering about twenty in all joined them, forming an order which they called the Sisters of St.

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"that their fall seems a matter of seconds"

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Luke, and finally building a church and convent.

About this time a hermit of the Orient made a pilgrimage to Constantinople and fell to worshiping a picture of the Madonna painted by St. Luke—that most aesthetic and learned of Christ's apostles. Stopping for breath between prayers he saw a stencil held by no hand, but moving across the stone before him and leaving these words: "This picture, painted by the hand of St. Luke, ought to be taken to the church of St. Luca on Monta della Guardia!" Thereupon the hermit, Teocle Kumma by name, sought the priests who were glad enough to comply with the holy instructions, and veiling the Madonna with a sacred cloth, he set out to find this church. Never having heard of it or of Monta della Guardia, and not knowing whether to seek north, south, east or west, he had a hard time for the first few years, during which he is said to have gone through every country in the world. At last he reached Rome and promenaded the streets, holding the image high before him.

It happened that, the senate being in session, a certain nobleman from Bologna named Pascipovero de Pascipoveri, was in attendance, and seeing the hermit one day asked what he carried.

"Why," cried he on hearing the tale, "that is my home." So they set out with many attendants, and their enthusiasm spread along the way. Word was

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hurried forward, and the city put on holiday attire. A three-day celebration followed, whereupon all marched up the mountain, and Sister Angela took the picture with her own hands. Thenceforth, the church was known as the Madonna di St. Luca.

Almost falling at his feet, the Bolognese offered the hermit pretty nearly every honor imaginable if he would remain, but let it be recorded to his credit that he turned away, saying: "My mission is completed; I am old and tired, and shall go back to the woods." Perhaps our popular latter-day expression first found utterance here in the eleventh century.

The people now felt that no harm could touch their beloved city since the miraculous picture guarded them. And indeed, for years this was true until one day a rain began to fall, gently at first, but coming harder and harder until after ninety days things looked serious. The grain was rotting and the country faced both plague and famine. Then someone thought of the picture, resulting in a rush up the mountain and a solemn procession of priests and laity through the city, bearing the image aloft. Before they had gone once around the square out came the sun, for the first time in three months, and that afternoon the sky was as bright and mild as a May morn.

Just here is where we are taught the value of leaving well enough alone. Not being satisfied by this

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"hold your breath and take a look into the fish market"

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T... RK
PU... ARY
A...
TH... NS

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condition which tallied exactly with their prayers, the people held another procession the next day, and one the next, resulting in so effectively plugging up the sky that a drought set in. The wells went dry, the ground began to crack into little squares that curled up at the edges, and things again looked serious. So another rush was made for the picture, and lo! when half around the square, a gentle rain began to fall!

I lost all patience at this juncture when told that instead of stopping now they actually paraded two more days to make sure of things, and was curious to know how long this time it rained. The chronicler did not remember, but, all things considered, it should have poured cats and dogs forever. Two years later Sister Angela died, and I've a vague uneasiness that she was drowned. But in this also the chronicler failed me. As a matter of fact, I think she ought to have married the hermit, built an ark, and sailed away on a glorious honeymoon.

Nearly two hundred years later the senate decreed that a golden crown should be placed on the Madonna's head, and the festival attending this marked the beginning of the yearly festival still held. On such days wealthy people of the city see that every child under twelve years of age is provided with a new suit of clothes, and other acts of generosity to those in meager circumstances are lavish. Fruits,

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fish and flesh are freely given away, and young pigs are much in evidence—I mean the quadrupeds. A few years ago, carried away by religious frenzy, a lady threw a suckling pig from her balcony into the crowd below, striking a Jew upon the head and causing much merriment. The Jew's sense of humor was probably warped. He had no business there anyhow.

It is very late. If you are sleeping now, perhaps in the fairy mist of dreams you may hear the message I send across the miles. If you do, smile, so the night will also be sweet to me. Good-night.

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VII

BOLOGNA TO RIMINI

LEAVING by the east gate one is on the same Via Aemilia—straight, white, edged with carefully placed guard stones, and extending through the broad fertile plain at the base of the Apennines, between the Reno, Aposa and Savena rivers. But geography will not appeal to you; it never does to girls. I remember once when motoring in France my sister took it into her hands to map out the trip. The first night from Paris she had us staying in Dijon, the second in Lyon, the third in Monaca, and then suddenly remembering some friends who were about due at Cherbourg, she calmly scheduled us to be at that place the following morning at nine o'clock. So I'll skip the geography. There are some things our respective sexes are not intended to comprehend. For instance, I could never describe the color of organdie.

San Lazzaro di Savena is almost against the walls outside of Bologna as a motor goes, but it, or its neighbor Castel San Pietro D'Emilia, is hardly worth a stop, although the latter town shows a gayer style of costumes and a darker type of women. At Imola,

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however, quite a pretentious village of eleven thousand, you must leave your car and take a peep at the Madonna del Pitrotello. This church claims nothing for herself—but like a highly imaginative mother who follows with clasped hands and doting eyes each achievement of her child, or a befussed old hen that hears a rhapsody in each "peep" of her solitary chick, she is content to stand beside her campanile, built by the great Bramante, and bask in its reflected glory. Such unselfish devotion merits a passing word of praise.

You will be interested in the palace where Princess Catherine died, and in the old L'Osservanza church where she is buried. Standing before this tomb I wondered if she were as successful in possessing another group of children as she was in her revenge when the first five were killed. But of that I will tell you later on.

A more progressive type of civic improvement seems to be in operation here, for paralleling the road a thirty-foot driving and bridle path, set between rows of young trees, is under construction, and this extends clear to Castel Bolognese, in fact beyond, even to Faenza. Castel Bolognese justly boasts a dignified church right on the roadside, which has been graced with the beautiful name "Madonna della Pace," and as though it were a good omen, its people themselves are peaceful, cheerful and anxious to put the visitor

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at his ease. Here is a place where one might stay a week—if he brought a bed and a tub.

The country on to Faenza now becomes more rolling, and one perceptibly feels the influence of the Apennines, against which he is gradually drawing to the south. Indeed along this stretch you will find the mountains near enough to distinguish ancient monasteries and walled towns upon their summits, castellated old piles with romance no doubt dripping from their ceilings, but do not let them inspire you to try the ascent. More picturesque and more accessible ones await you farther along.

I can picture your face as it will look when approaching Faenza. First, clearly against the sky, stand its three Campaniles, visible a long time before the town comes in sight; for in this direction and at this time of day the sun will be directly overhead and shedding its warmth full upon them. You will have a subtle feeling that they are on the lookout for some weary traveler journeying across the plain, and beckoning him to a home of dignity and peace.

This illusion is somewhat dispelled when within the old city gates, because Faenza is not endowed with much dignity. True, there are many examples of beautiful iron work over the windows, yet curiously these grills are not confined to windows on the ground floor—a common enough custom—but the second and third floors (when there is a third floor) seem

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to be equally protected. If this were the result of idle hours one might still hope to find the promised peace, but alas, I fear it was born of necessity.

Until five years ago Faenza could muster but a few thousand people. About that time the manufacture of majolica was revived after a sleep of two or three hundred years, and the census has grown to nearly fourteen thousand, though not made up of a population which gives much impetus to things artistic.

It will repay you, however, to stop half an hour and see the fine cathedral of San Pietro facing the piazza Vittorio Emmanuele. Then go a few steps off the square to the secularized convent, Santa Maria dell' Angelo. They have much to show in this quiet place, but if you head straight for an enormous group of the Virgin and two Saint Johns by Lombardi, and a marble bust of John alone, which they claim is from the chisel of Settignano, you will have seen the best. After this, buy some roasted chestnuts (if you come in chestnut time) and settle down for your run of fifteen kilometers to Forli.

On reaching this Anno Domini town the first thing Brentheim and I sought was food, but besides discovering that the hotel *sala da pranzo* had an extraordinarily high ceiling, and a heavy bare walnut floor, we found the room quite barren of interest—and in truth, left it feeling sympathetically vacuous in our own central zones. But outside of this damp struc-

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"being Sunday the market stalls were snubbed and deserted"

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ture there is a quaint little city, one of whose unique features, varying from its sister places hereabouts, are the street lamp posts of classic design in iron, resting on low pedestals of stone; and there are an abundance of these, for the town is well lighted.

Facing the central square, that was in olden times the scene of bull fights and other like sports, are the two principal churches: one San Mercuriale, appropriately named for Forli's first bishop, and the other, Santa Croce, perhaps originally more handsome but injured by modern renovation.

It was on this square also that the beautiful Catherine Sforza, widowed at twenty-six, stood and gloatingly watched the horrible punishment inflicted upon the assassins of her husband, Riaro. An uprising had broken out among the people, led by the aesthetic old Count Orsi, who bitterly opposed the action of Pope Sixtus IV in placing his arrogant, ignorant nephew—whom he had married to the imperial Catherine—to rule over them. At the first sign of trouble the royal soldiers ignominiously fled, shutting themselves in the fortress and leaving helpless their princess as well as her five lovely children.

She was then confronted with some rather harsh demands, but, wisely seeming to take them under consideration, retired to her room, later sending the conspirators word that she desired a consultation with her Captain of the Guards before making a final decision. This brought forth a shout of derision, and the city's

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population soon gathered about the castle to heap her with insults for supposing them simple enough to walk into so obvious a trap.

Catherine, however, never once losing her patrician dignity, consented to leave the five children as hostages till her return, and this satisfying the most skeptical, she crossed the square and was admitted to the fortress.

Great rejoicing ensued when the soldiers found their princess unhurt and among them, and a dauntless flow of courage entered each man where before had been rank cowardice. Having mildly scolded them for their disloyalty, but feeling convinced that they could now be relied upon, she ascended the wall, stood before the growling mob outside and demanded their surrender.

Again the people laughed and peppered her with stinging insults, until one of them stepping forward derisively called:

"Do not forget your pretty children, Signora! They, as hostages, shall be killed unless you instantly return to us!"

For a moment even the imperious Catherine paled, but in a clear, firm voice made answer:

"I shall have more pretty children! It is vengeance I now require!"

As though this reply were a prearranged signal, the gates flew open letting the soldiers pour into the

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"beyond the gates, idling in the public gardens"

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square upon the unprepared people; many of whom were slain, but every man that had played a part in the prince's death was taken captive.

Early next morning Catherine again stood upon the wall, this time to direct their punishment. She had spent all the previous night alternately weeping for those five little ones who had been found with slashed throats, and devising a suitable torture for the prisoners; so now she carefully directed how each should be tied by the foot to the tail of a wild horse left free to plunge about the square until its victim had been trampled into pulp.

The eighty-five years of the aged Count Orsi did not mitigate his torture in the least; indeed he was doomed to greater suffering by first being compelled to witness the wanton destruction of his palace—the most stinging degradation at that time possible to heap upon an Italian nobleman. Later on, his heart was torn out and paraded through the streets. Heaven preserve us from the vengeance of a Sforza!

To-day, being the first Sunday in Advent, the market stalls were snubbed and idle, and a clear sky smiled on a deserted city; for the people were beyond the gates strolling in the public gardens, or communing with their dead in the Campo Santo, since there were graves to be remembered and candles to be lit.

On approaching Forlimpopoli, leave your motor about a hundred yards before reaching the wall and

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walk up to it. The old cemetery on your right, and the broken arches of the crumbling city gate just ahead, can best be felt in this way. It is an impression—just these two evidences of decay in man himself, and in his handiwork—which I know you will carry away.

Here you will be introduced to a hot bed of socialism, and in the rather cramped public square are glaring signs of socialistic meeting halls. The people seemed surly and crowded up as soon as we stopped, looking at our car as though about to demand that we divide it with them. There have been times I would willingly part with the noise and smell—which I cannot think would be an inappropriate gift to the Forlimpopoli agitators.

To the right now, for a long stretch, the mountains hold up to view an array of castles that seem, each in itself, a picture. One monastery on these heights has planted a cross in the ground, so massive that it reaches above the surrounding cypress trees even to the roof, as though proclaiming across the lowland that this place must not be confounded with its decaying neighbors, whose foundations were settled in blood and whose walls shut in scenes such as no genteel mind would describe. There are plenty of monasteries and mediæval castles between here and Milan, of course, but without mountains to show them off.

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"and the broken arches of the crumbling city gate"

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From this point the road becomes slightly rolling and is close under the hills. Cesena, with its quaint donkey carts, twelve kilometers beyond Forlimpopoli, lies comfortably at the base of these, and its entire seven thousand people seem so secure in their protection that it is indeed a town independent of conventions. Though Sunday afternoon, women were scrubbing clothes in the moat outside the walls, and from their manner of levity we judged no news of war, or no cloud of any kind had dimmed their spirits. Yet, at the same time, a procession came in sight; a procession of young and old marching solemnly to the Campo Santo, while within the Piazza Vittorio Emmanuele crowds shouldered close to bulletins just posted, and a few women turned away with their shawls held up to cover tear washed eyes.

In this birthplace of two popes, Pius VI and VII, and in an obscure square at the edge of the town, Cesena has honored another of her great men—the masterful physician, Maurizio Bulfalini, and his statue by the modern Zacchi is worthy of a more prominent setting.

All of this month will be devoted to the repose of souls. When approaching a town at twilight, its cemetery presents an effect that is weird, yet fairy-like. For around the graves are placed a multitude of little lamps—small cups of oil with tiny wicks. The flames are no larger than half a candle light, but

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so congested that the mass of twinkles sheds a soft glow, low down upon the earth; luminous, as though a spirit sheet woven with silver threads had been spread upon the sacred place to keep warm the dead; while from within the chapel—always standing at the rear of these four walled plots—a more cheerful radiance of larger candles floods through the doors and windows, making one think that here in the stilly night the graves have released their tenants to file in and hold mute service before the holy shrine. Each by each, during the dark hours, these little flames burn out, or are blown out by a breeze, so that only here and there is one strong enough to survive till dawn; but the chapel light goes on without a falter. My heart, dear lady, is an empty chapel, standing above a wilderness of more silent wastes than this, but with an imperishable flame to guide you, a love to comfort you, whenever you are tired and feel the need of coming through the night.

The next place on your route would be Savignano, did I not urge you to leave the road for a brief space and turn right, six kilometers from Cesena, to an interesting church above the village of Bertinoro. At the foot of this road—that leads up a five-hundred foot climb, and every foot a hard pull—stands a little shrine. In itself it is nothing more than the thousands which dot Italy's highways and byways, but as we came along a woman lay there sobbing. A

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"crowded up, looking at our motor"

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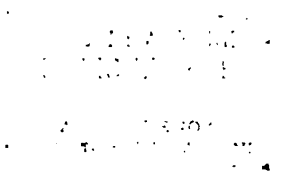

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group of kindly disposed neighbors stood back and in silence around her, and one of these whispered to Brentheim that her husband, of less than a year, was among the dead at Tripoli. Wretched little piece of crushed humanity she was, wringing her hands in anguish at the foot of this cross—for she needed him then, if ever.

With this in our hearts, we ascended to the very crest, where the church, once a Capuchian monastery, stands huge and severe in solitary grandeur, commanding a view that is well nigh matchless. To the west, north and east, lies the plain where Cæsar marched his legions, and with half closed eyes one can almost see the silver eagle still flashing from his standards. Grass and a few stunted trees have long since claimed the graveyard of the ancient monks, laying a soft veil of green over the once unsightly mounds, and through this I wandered to a low fence that overlooks the valley.

The hour was one of those peaceful afternoons which exists only beneath the rarest of Italian skies, and the sun's slant was just enough to sweep my entire body with its genial warmth. A lizard slipped shyly out and watched me, his delicate body pulsing in time with the low mass chant being sung by a choir of priests; while deep organ chords, exquisitely simple, came floating from the musty church. It was then I missed you, then that I wanted you. I wanted

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to take you back to the little roadside shrine so you could still the agony of that suffering woman, and I wanted to see you do it and know that it was all done by you; and then—then I wanted you to turn and comfort me, sweet mistress of my life!

The church is large and impressive and poor, and that is all; but it possesses a power to make one feel that it is there. If you should go to it, please lean upon the wall where I rested. You can find the place—where a little cross has been chipped in the stone. Happening to look down between my elbows I discovered this, and named it the Cross of St. Polly.

Over a narrow valley and standing like a sovereign on the next eastward crest is the "Madonna of the Hill," the largest of these Romagna monasteries. A brief stop there is worth while, before swinging out again onto the Via Aemelia, and heading toward Rimini. On this last stretch of the day's run, you will pass through but two places of mild interest, Savignano and San Arcangelo, and at the latter of these the road begins a gradual slope toward the Adriatic. There, close down by the shore of this blue sea, beneath a purple haze which hangs low above its clustered roofs, lies Rimini.

To-night, as we drove in, it seemed too restful to have been a home of violent loves, and violent deeds, and violent deaths. Were we not sure, I might think our road had led us to another town.

Good-night.

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"Sesena, with its quaint donkey carts"

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VIII

RIMINI

HAS it ever been said that women are the real soldiers of a war? Then I say it now. Men have the blessed privilege only to fight and die—women to suffer and wait; and God pity those who suffer and wait. I know something of which I speak.

This burst of pyrotechnics is due to an unusual circumstance; for, as a rule, I cannot rise to epigrammatic outbreaks. Neither do I think that Italy regrets her war—except, perhaps, just now in this district, which has furnished many of the three hundred bersaglieri butchered yesterday by the Arabs, and where, during the last few hours, names of the dead are being posted about town on hectic bulletins.

The bersaglieri are the crack infantry of the Italian army, and are recruited through competition from all other branches of foot service. They are literally the men who have outrun, and outmatched in other forms of physical endurance, the entire field, and for this they are idolized. Their quick, sprightly gait, their swinging arms, bespeak a splendid physical condition; and the tail feathers of a cock flowing from their hats give them a jauntiness which is impertinent and daring. These chaps have a song—I

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could whistle it for you—that approaches the National Air in popularity, and whenever a band blares it forth the people cheer like mad, altogether cutting up as we do over the strains of Dixie. There are no playing bands to-day—nothing but the hush of suppressed sorrow; and my own spirit, also, bows its head before the bulletins which herald a destruction of well specimened manhood.

Shortly after breakfast we drove to the Duomo, in early times known as St. Francesco, but later called the Temple of Malatesta. This cathedral is a grand structure; but with a mixture of Gothic and Renaissance that is rather puzzling, suggesting many additions during its six centuries of endurance. Nor has it been completed in all this time—the most striking omissions being the dome and upper portion of the façade. Very simple is the front, with a few porphyry plaques like one sees in Venetian palaces; a splendid arch, in whose center stands the door, while midway to each corner is a half column—fluted Doric. Higher up, a second arch was once begun to carry the roof to a graceful peak, but the masons must have gone out on a strike and never returned, which leaves one with the impression that a Kansas cyclone had passed this way. Yet do not think, as you justly may, that there is nothing here to be admired. Far from it! For within, everything is finished, so highly finished, and so long finished, as to be polished by the

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"that a Kansas cyclone has passed this way"

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handling of countless fingers which have paid their homage in gentle passing touches.

You will be interested by a curious monogram, seeming without regard for reason to be stuck around on everything, high and low. "S.I." these letters are, gracefully intertwined; and, like hunting Easter eggs, one comes upon them in the most unexpected and secluded places. Being in a Christian edifice, they seemed almost as though intended for "I.H.S.," but it would indeed be strange, quoth Brentheim, if the sculptor persistently left out the "H," whereupon he sent for the church guard and professional romancer to set things right.

"The 'S.I.' stand for Sigismund and Isotta," said this peripatetic encyclopedia, and proceeded to excite our growing astonishment by pointing out so many tombs and memorials to this worldly pair, that for a time I almost believed we were standing in a hall of fame.

"This," he said, indicating an altar on the right, "is Sigismund Malatesta's tomb; this one to the left is the Malatesta family tomb; this second one on the right is Isotta's tomb. This bas relief is Sigismund himself. Above the first chapel is St. Sigismund of Burgundy, Sigismund Malatesta's patron saint. That life-size archangel in marble is a portrait of Isotta herself. Here are two portrait medallions of Sigismund; and these carved bronze garlands depict

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a fanciful conception which developed from Sigismund's mind into a beautiful poem to Isotta. That relief over there portrays the triumph of Sigismund. The columns," he concluded, "rest on marble elephants which represent the heraldic arms of Sigismund, while the marble roses placed about are the heraldic arms of Isotta."

I then remembered as we approached the church, having seen across the façade this Latin inscription: "To the immortal God, Sigismund Pandalfo Malatesta of the Pandelfo." At the time it had seemed a simple tribute written by a man who was not ashamed to sign his name to it; but now I began to suspect that he had himself meant to pose as the Deity.

As our guide pointed out the last of these Sigismund advertisements, his voice dropped to a low and tremulous whisper, leaving us in doubt whether it was attributable to reverence or shame. Brentheim had been reading up on this particular Malatesta and had told me that he was a remarkable personage in his day; having led a successful army at the age of thirteen, and having amassed a huge fortune which he spent well, but hardly did I credit him with sufficient power to corner a church and use its sacred walls as advertising space for a love that was no less cardinal than sweet. Yet here it was, and with monograms enough to please the most exacting swain who ever carved hearts in the trees of his Forest Arden.

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"before the Madonna, face down upon the steps"

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The sexton looked pained when we mentioned a few of these thoughts and insisted that in later years the pair had been properly wedded. What's the use of resurrecting the old scandal, anyway! But whether they were or not, I am grateful to this cavalier for the pleasure of seeing at least one church pillar supported by some animal other than those grotesque lions which have begun to haunt my sleep. For each of the four pilasters guarding the Malatesta tombs rests upon a perfectly nice pair of elephants, splendidly carved—the best master represented being Donatello.

The Count coveted a kodak of these, and inducing the sexton to take a walk, he set his little tripod back in a corner of the altar. The exposure, he said, would take about twenty minutes, so after opening the shutter, we reposed ourselves to wait. The church was so quiet that it seemed deserted, and we were too merged into the gray atmosphere of our hiding place to attract the attention of any one coming from the sunlit street. It was then that transpired the cause of my opening burst of feeling.

A girl entered, letting the door slam with a violence that sent its echo hollowing like a growl across the vaulted space. She looked neither to the right or left, but came staggering to the chapel in whose shadows we sat. A pitiful little shawl had been

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drawn over her head, and was clasped to her breast by hands which were expressions of agony. In an instant the Count would have arisen to close the shutter and wait until she left, but she had thrown herself before the Madonna, face down upon the steps, in such an attitude of grief, with such a heart tortured moan, that he could not move. There she lay with her lips upon the stones, her whole body shaking with convulsive sobs, and beseeching the Virgin in impassioned whispers to reach down and touch her—to say that her father's name, printed in the list of dead, was a mistake, a monstrous lie.

I do not know how long it was, but when she had at last been quieted by some blessed peace, or sleep, we thought of the camera that all this while was making its unfeeling record, and, closing it softly, we slipped away. There may be other things in the Temple of Malatesta as interesting as the Sigismund and Isotta memorials, but the most sacred of its treasures we had seen from our hiding place, so we did not return. I will send you the picture. There is no harm in having this film developed—no sacrilege in bringing to the surface that secret now lying deep in the mysteries of its compound—for, arising from the murky chemicals, will stand a prototype of such perfect faith that all who see may profit. Sometimes in the nights I get to wondering if on the film of your subconsciousness I could ever throw a philter

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"there are water carts pushed by hand"

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potent enough to develop my image in your heart!

Sigismund has his graces as well as his disgraces, for none of the Malatestas equaled him in art, or in foresight for his people. Many of the markers standing to-day preserve the identity of places that would have been smothered by centuries but for his care. One of these in the market place, a square column five feet high and capped in simple Doric, shows the identical spot where Cæsar stood when addressing his troops prior to crossing the Rubicon. No iron fence surrounds it; there is no sign, "Hands off," and it now serves as a convenient place for boys to lean their bicycles. That is a notable thing about Italy—its towns are so surfeited with testimonials of past glory that the people seem careless with them, and yet at the same time would no more think of marring one little relic than hacking into their own bodies. Were this rare thing in America, unless a squad of police stood over it day and night to fight off keepsake hunters, it would last about a week.

Nearby, and overlooking the canal, is the plot of holy ground where Anthony addressed the people. An interesting chapel has been built here, either to commemorate the occasion, or to serve as a reliquary for his wounded feelings—since, it is said, the people so jeered at him that he turned in a pout and preached to the fishes. We found the old man who keeps the keys of this place a very intense

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personage, charged with enthusiasm, and almost vulgarly familiar with St. Anthony's private affairs. With much show of devotion he told us that at the sound of the Saint's beloved voice, the fishes leapt from the water, many of them climbing up the bank and sitting in the grass to listen. Brentheim's brain took an interesting whirl when, to support this tale, I assured him that in America there are any quantity of sharks and lobsters who regularly attend public functions. The poor Count gets hopelessly lost among our colloquialisms.

In many ways you will find Rimini more decidedly picturesque than other cities up the Via Aemilia. After nightfall, and indifferent to the war cloud hovering above their heads, girls and swains are inclined to walk the streets in laughing, gossiping groups of ten or twenty each, refusing to give way before other walkers until some moments of good natured banter have been exchanged. What the majority of these happy souls lack in home comforts may be judged by the streams of girls and boys who come each morning with earthen vessels to the public fountain. The girls have a way of letting the jar rest on one hip and throwing an arm about its neck which is most pleasing to see. The boys employ almost every style. Then, too, there are hand-pushed water carts holding a dozen larger jars, and the men who follow this trade will take customers only up to this number, thereafter

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"he beckoned up other soldiers who had been to America"

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closing their list and refusing additional business.

In the center of the square where the largest fountain stands, is also a statue of Pope Pius V, but a few years after its completion, Rimini, then happening to be in the throes of a plague, discovered she possessed no patron saint. That is a most serious blunder and a dire menace to any Italian city; really an inexcusable omission, I might say. But there being no time in which to create one, those counselors who were still alive met and subsidized the good pope, changing his name, with no more compunction than you would change your glove, to St. Gaudenzio. Wherewith the plague disappeared, and St. Gaudenzio, represented by the image of Pius V, still remains a patron saint of this district.

Dante wrote his tragic story of Francesca here, and the house where he dwelt stands near that in which the hunchback worked his just revenge. But one cannot get very far from Sigismund, in no matter what direction he turns, for again looking across the square, behind the Victor Emmanuel theater, looms his palace. It is used now for a prison and certainly seems adapted to the purpose.

While there, a soldier on guard said to us in very fair English that he had just returned from America, where he worked for five years. Asking why he came back, for it seemed unusual, unless during that time he had managed to acquire the six hundred dol-

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lars which is popularly thought to be the Italian immigrant's aim—as also the extent of his use for us—he answered because of the war. Was his patriotism so strong after a five year absence? No, he explained, but the government had sent a call. Then developed a rather surprising condition. The Italians in each district who are eligible for military service, must report at certain intervals to the governor or chief officer of that district; and if one leaves the country he must report by letter—unless of course, he takes out naturalization papers elsewhere. But papers of this kind in America do not protect him in case of war, because when his government issues a call for reserves he must immediately answer, or never go back at all under penalty of imprisonment. And eventually, he intends to return and live in peace beneath the Italian skies—at least it is reasonable to suppose that the majority of immigrants go to America with this dream in mind. Seeing my interest, he beckoned up other soldiers who said they had been in America making lots of money when called to the war. Some of these were very much disgruntled.

Not far from this palace is the Arch of Augustus —first Roman Emperor—that everybody goes to see, but knowing your predilection for snooking around the byways, I suggest that you go beyond this to the bridge, and tell me if you ever saw a more picturesque

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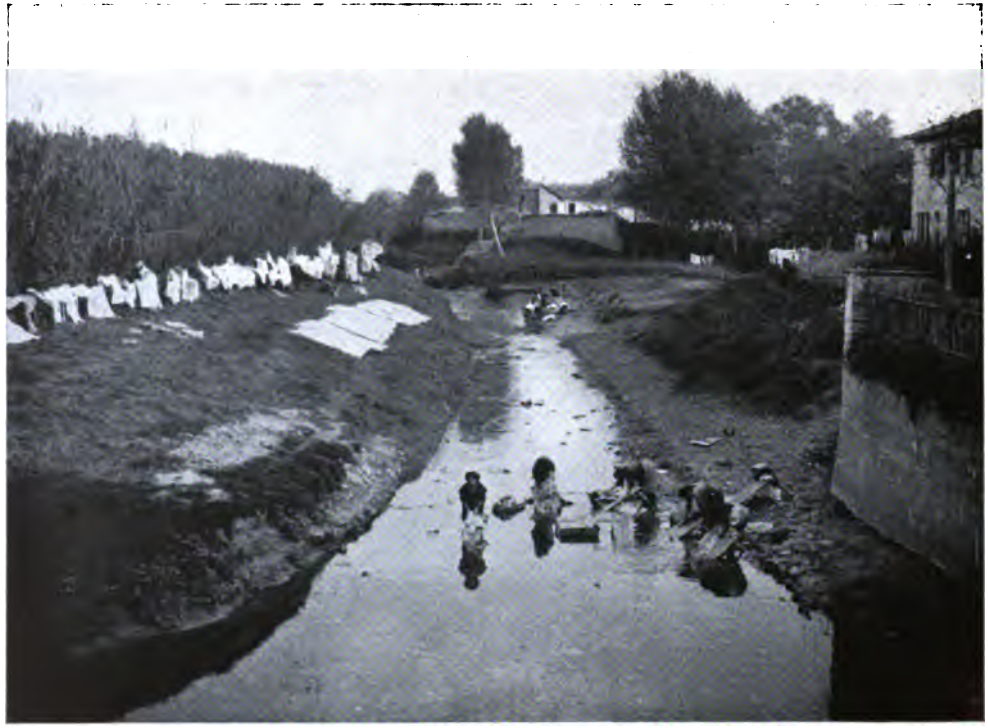

"picturesque lot of women washing clothes in the little stream"

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lot of women washing clothes than those in the little stream which follows the old moat.

Coming back on Via Corso di Augustus, you might stop in front of a modest private dwelling, number 45, long enough to glance in at the entrance—through the double iron gates, between rows of Doric columns and across the courtyard at a piece of statuary festooned with English ivy. Many private courts have features of this kind, or painted backgrounds of mountains and tropic verdure, but they are not all worth taking a peep at. And while there, raise your eyes to the brass knockers.

There was a time when I dreamed we would some day seek out these trifling things together. And yet I cannot believe that you were far from me to-day; for in the south wind I heard your laugh, and in the silence of the church your spirit came. I can never be wholly alone when you come to me like this!

Beyond the walls, on the Adriatic, is a collection of villas, lifeless now, belonging to the migratory class who are still feeding upon the gayeties of other shores. Yet these days here are so balmy, so hazy and full of dreams, that I cannot understand any one being able to resist their charm—especially when in possession of such delightful homes.

We drove very close to the water's edge and for half an hour I sat looking out across the blue sea, while Brentheim hiked off to use his camera. Here

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again I wanted you strangely much. The water barely stirred—for it was such a lazy afternoon—and the twenty or so craft, with their poetic orange and brown sails stretched in lateen fashion, seemed to be there only for looks, so motionless they appeared.

I finally had to close one eye and sight past the driver's seat to find if they did move a little after all. I know of no more subtle comfort than realizing everything about me is so lazy that I must shut one eye and sight, or remain uncertain if it moves—unless, indeed, it is when I am too lazy to shut the eye. Good-night.

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"the identical spot where Caesar stood"

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IX

FROM RIMINI TO SAN MARINO

FROM Rimini, if you do not go to San Marino, you will be disappointing me and missing a place that stands without equal in the world. Why it is so seldom visited I am unable to understand, unless books of travel have not given it enough space to whet the public's interest. The road alone is a delight; a road rich in curves and dizzy places which catch one's breath by its precipitous climb from sea level to the clouds, constantly introducing one to pastoral scenes of wondrous beauty, where kneeling peasant girls garner fragrant grass with hand forged sickles, or work bare armed among the grape vines. It all forms a picture of haunting charm, leaving an impression that peace and love of honest toil are lavishly bestowed upon this people.

In the midst of changing panoramas such as these you will look ahead and see Mt. Titano, of almost perpendicular rock, rising twenty-five hundred feet to the sky, and smile at the suggestion that on its summit—away up on those bony peaks which seem but a nesting place for eagles—a city lies; the seat of a republic absolutely independent of the Italy which

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surrounds it, and the oldest and smallest in the world; a country of 11,002 inhabitants, of which every inhabitant claims to be one of this two; a place of independent coinage, independent issue of stamps, independent in every way—a place without equal in the world.

The entire territory of this republic can be included in a twenty-four mile circle, though in its early days the area was much smaller, being in fact only this mountain itself. Subsequently, an alliance with Pope Pius II and the King of Naples against the Malatesta family enlarged its boundary, and since then other potentates—notably Napoleon—wished to increase it still more, but the Sammarinese have persistently refused. However, I shall give you no more history, but do listen while I tell one titbit about the beautiful Felicita.

She was a Roman, poetic, dark, twenty-four years of age, of noble birth and recently plunged into widowhood by a well-aimed Tuscan arrow; moreover, as comely and gentle as Roman girls grew to be in those times. One day there came a stone cutter by the name of Marinus, whom she engaged to cut additional symbols upon the departed's tomb. Each morning Felicita went with her ladies to watch his progress, but not many days of this had passed before some subtle thing about the man's physique, something about his handsome face and patrician

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"or work among the grape vines"

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head, suggested that she might leave the ladies at home, and this she did. It was warm, she argued with herself, and they were subject to headaches. So, thereafter, coming alone and sitting upon a nearby stone, she would converse with him while watching his skillful chisel chip into life figures of marvelous grace. For, while still holding in tender memory him who rested within, Felicita was becoming interested in him who worked without, which shows—if we may draw a lesson en passant—that a dead one has never yet succeeded with your delectable sex. But Marinus had been converted to Christianity years before; indeed he had been converted so good and strong that the Roman beauty didn't jump his pulses a single beat. Finally, however, the crisis came. The day was deliciously soft and warm, and Felicita delicately plumed for her final assault.

They were alone. A mile to the north the great city lay drowsing by the Tiber. A few birds stirred the air with lazy notes, and the stone cutter's chisel seemed to have lost its sharpness in the languor of the hour. She had been watching him in meditative silence, watching him from under her long lashes with a steady gaze which belied the increasing tumult in her breast, and it was not entirely the summer sun that spread a warm glow over her neck and shoulders. Then, with a soft catch in her throat, she arose and stood before him—stood for a moment looking up into

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his questioning eyes with challenge and surrender leaping from her own. Since he did not stir, she gently pried his inert fingers from the implements of his trade, and stepped within his arms. What his pulses did at that moment is not recorded, but this much is—which afterwards came from the Roman girl's own lips: he held her for a tense, short moment, then bent his head, and began to preach of Christ.

To make a long story short, she became a devout convert and gave him this mountain, Titano, where he went to live as a hermit. Maybe he was afraid to come down and see her again—I don't know, but at any rate he did not come. His bed, cut like a shelf in the solid rock, stands in the little chapel of San Pietro, or, rather, the chapel is built up against the bed in order to embrace it. Not far away is a bronze bust of him made by Tadoloni, and nearer by is a memorial to the Roman girl with this motto: "Felicita, vale in Dio."

Marinus dwelt here many years, gathering many converts, and finally on the verge of death he raised up saying: "I leave you free from both men,"—meaning imperial and papal sway. That was the beginning of San Marino, and the origin of its name.

The city itself, perched upon this solid rock, commands one of the most beautiful views I have ever beheld. The blue Adriatic, ten miles away, seems to lie almost at its feet, and one feels that he could drop

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"that on its summit a city lies"

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a rifle ball into the town of Rimini, or the farther Pine Woods of Ravenna; while inland are Montesudo and Verrucchio, and beyond the Morrecchia one sees Santangelo and Cesena. When the atmosphere is rare—and this is most frequently so at San Marino —the rose tinted mountains of Dalmatia, across the Adriatic, stand clear cut and unmistakable. The people are a bit difficult to understand, speaking as they do the dialect of the Romagne, but they seem most hospitably inclined and imbued with a true democratic spirit.

Another thing may be puzzling if you happen to notice the bells in their twelve hundred year old campanile, for here the old Italian way of striking hours is still in vogue, the twenty-four periods being divided into four parts and the clock striking only up to six times. Should one awaken in the dark and hear the campanile chimes toll four, he would not know whether the hour were ten at night or four in the morning.

Your motor cannot go farther than the gate—there is no law against it, except that of physics; it just can't go. The only vehicle of any kind I saw inside the town was a butcher's cart drawn by a little donkey which had stuck all four feet out in front and was skidding down the main street for dear life. Only contact with a wall could have stopped it. Indeed there seems to be no spot in this town where one

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cannot look down hill in every direction, and up hill in every direction at the same time. Never were there such angles and curves, for their streets are laid out according to the natural formation of the rock, and if a prehistoric upheaval left it swayback, or wavy, or suddenly changed from a fifteen per cent. down grade to a forty per cent. up grade, far be it from the Sammarinese to improve on nature.

Before leaving you will probably enter a house on one street, go upstairs and step out the roof onto another street. Do not show any surprise at this because it is one of the most usual things in San Marino. It would seem as though these thoroughfares had to be in solid rock to sustain their names. The irony of calling a street fifty feet in length the "Via Santa Beltiste Bellucii," or the "Via della Santa Borgolatte" has not penetrated the Sammarinese brain. Yet Brentheim says it is a commonly found phenomena—that the smallest automobiles, for instance, usually make the most noise. Personally, I have noticed this to be more particularly true of tongues.

In most respects this little place is abreast of the times. Its theater seats five hundred people, and the local dramatic club gives very creditable shows, we are told. There is a boys' school and a girls' school, both of high standards; a hospital and a poorhouse kept up on endowments and government grants—the former containing an operating hall built in the

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"your motor cannot go farther than the gate"

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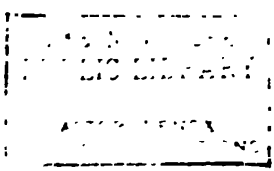

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most approved style, but, as you may imagine, rarely used; a dispensary open daily from twelve to one, and a Children's Free Hospital. The postoffice, on whose outside walls are embodied the local measures that have been in use five hundred years, and where occasional disputes are yet settled, is interesting for several reasons. One mail daily goes and comes, including Sundays and holidays; the postmaster opens up at three stated hours during the twenty-four and all who want anything must be there waiting or shut goes the window. Here also is a pharmacy where the one doctor may be found—and in this connection let me state that both the chief surgeon and doctor residing in San Marino city, and the one doctor in each of its smaller towns, are foreigners who for political reasons are chosen by the government from the outside. Neither doctors, judges nor gendarmes can be taken from within its border.

The republic lacks a weekly newspaper, because the first editor who voiced his thunder many years ago found it convenient to slip away over night after its introductory issue, and now the press is covered with cobwebs, there having been no one else brave enough to tackle the job.

Only light native wines and a liquor called Titano are drunk, and Titano, like the mountain for which it is named, is formidable. Water, however, is the principal drink and this is piped from the roof drain-

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age into a pair of very large cisterns placed under the public square. Above these is the public pump, surmounted by a statue of Liberty, and here citizens come with buckets, for there is no water supply in town—not even a private cistern. Here, too, is the evening meeting place of maids and swains, who, by the way, must be married by the church—since a civil ceremony has never been permitted.

I must mention the civil government, about which you both should have an idea before going there. In the first place, effective citizenship is acquired by right in the third generation, or by decree of the Sovereign and Regent Council after a residence of six years. Nor is any one permitted to vote unless he can read and write. I know of a country which might learn something here.

Supreme authority is vested in a Council of sixty members, divided into three classes; twenty patrician, twenty citizens, twenty countrymen. Theirs is life service, and should a vacancy occur by death, resignation or unworthiness, the Council elects the successor, choosing him from the same class as the late member. No one under twenty-five years of age can serve,—but old age has no limit. From this body is chosen a Council of Twelve who, twice a year, draw by lot twelve other councilmen, from whom are elected presidents for the following six months—for it must be remembered that San Marino has two chief

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"look down hill and up hill at the same time"

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executives. These last twelve names are then grouped in pairs of one noble and one commoner each, and placed in a box; the oldest nobleman steps up and draws, reads off the result, and the election is over.

This drawing always takes place with great formality in the early hours of night, and immediately following begins a curious ceremony. By a fire signal from the three watch towers, every church bell over the dominion is warned to ring its loudest, while in the square the military band, followed by authorities of state and the people bearing torches, move in a body to congratulate the newly elected ones, who in turn, open their homes for a general reception. Presidents hold office for six months, and can be re-elected after a retirement of three years; neither can any one who is elected refuse to serve under a fine of one hundred scudo, a scudo being about ninety-eight cents. Without some such arrangements there might probably not be enough people to go around, and third terms would become a necessity. Should a president die or become seriously ill, the Council immediately elects a successor from his class.

For there is a class distinction in this republic. The President chosen from the nobles, while equal in authority, takes precedence over his colleague who comes from the people; and in appearing together,

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also, he from the citizen or country class stands on the noble's left—except during church services, where, the throne being in *cornu evangeli,* he changes sides in favor of the patrician.

Capital punishment was abolished about the time Garibaldi sought shelter here in 1849, and all crimes deserving more than six months' imprisonment are expiated in the Italian penitentiaries—the San Marino government paying Italy a stipulated sum per diem for such prisoners.

Their law proceedings are in the hands of an alien judge residing in the city with a title of "Sua Signoria," who decides civil causes, conducts inquiries in criminal cases, giving judgment on light offenses and issuing decrees in affairs of voluntary jurisdiction. But, there being no civil code, common law is applied.

At present one prisoner is in jail, and before being captured he furnished the excitement of the day. We were having a very peaceful time when this chap suddenly decided to kill his nephew. I cannot help thinking that he also wanted to destroy the entire place, since the weapon he used, or tried to use, was one of those old bell-mouthed blunderbusses which shoots in every direction except straight back. Providentially it wouldn't go off, although the irate uncle tried several times to make it fire while pursuing his agile nephew through practically every street in town. Whenever the old fellow brought it to his shoulder

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and pulled the trigger, the hammer came down like a blacksmith's sledge and citizens either fell prone to the street, or straightened themselves flat against the walls. I feel a bit thinned out myself. But the terrorizer stumbled, whereupon three or four men pinioned him while another stealthily crawled up and put his hat over the gun. They said he might get ten days for this. Brentheim, who afterward saw the nephew, says the impending punishment should not be for the old man's attempt, but for his failure. The Count is very quick in sizing people up.

Of course the town was thoroughly excited about having some one to put in jail, and proud too, because this does not occur more than three or four times a year. We went to see the place, an old castle on the highest peak of Titano called The Rocco, and having registered our names and promised not to give anything to the prisoner, one of the six original gendarmes took us through. Really, it isn't half bad being a prisoner in The Rocco. The view is exquisite.

This officer said concerning the militia, at which he threw a touch of scorn just as sometimes our regular army men do at state troops, that all lay citizens from sixteen to fifty-five years of age, except students, are enrolled in the Civil Guard, from which a company of sixty is chosen to attend public services and, if necessary, help the gendarmes keep order. Another branch of the army is the Noble Guard, also of sixty,

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who serve as the council's escort on solemn occasions. Every soldier and citizen must be able to sing the national anthem, which is strangely good, being from one of Guido Monaco's themes in the Biblioteca Laurenziana.

There are no duties collected at the frontier, but a warning is posted against any one bringing in tobacco or salt, so be careful about your cigarettes. Goods consigned here from countries other than Italy pay revenue at the Italian ports of entry, and the system by which San Marino is reimbursed is calculated on the Italian basis of assessment made annually upon each inhabitant of its own, multiplied by the number of Sammarinese. Thus the little republic receives annually about sixty thousand lira. The tax rate is but one and a half per cent. on realty and nothing at all on personality, yet the state funds are ample and for the most part expended on education, public works, officials and charity.

Of course they will want to show you their buildings, of which they seem very proud, and the gallery with a conglomeration of seventy-five treasures—of which forty-seven are by unknowns. You, however, will find San Marino uninteresting from an artistic point of view, but thoroughly absorbing for its marvelous location, unique form of government and antiquity.

From the very tip top of this remarkable place,

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"from where the valley cattle look like ants"

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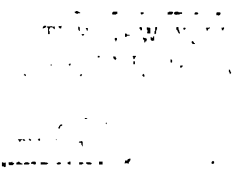

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from a crag where the valley cattle look like ants and roads are hardly more than spider webs frosted by the dew, I sent a wireless via a sweet and silent code. If it went true, you heard but an echo of what my heart was saying; if it failed, dear Polly, then I whisper it to you now. Good-night.

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X

RIMINI TO RAVENNA

YOU may not feel like staying over two nights in Rimini, but two are quite necessary since it would be a crime to miss San Marino. We concluded to make a third of it and spin to Ravenna, on a broad highway generally excellent—except in some places worn.

For years I have heard people discuss the connection of Roman and Byzantine art until the very mention of it sent me into a dumb hysteria. So at dinner last night Brentheim and I discussed the trip, deciding after some deliberation that it would be a shame when only a brief thirty miles from the Romanesque-Byzantine stronghold to pass without making an attack.

My conception, if a vague impression can be so termed, of this combination of architecture was that it tinged on something bizarre—not anything in particular, but just something—and my conception flattered it. One very fine and another very dazzling type have been spoiled in the mix-up.

However, it is a run I hope you will take, because the road, leading northwest along the Adriatic, passes

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"across the Augustus Caesar bridge"

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through many attractive villages where one can spend a pleasant hour. Yet we made few stops, being too anxious to see that one time naval station of Emperor Augustus, which smiled over its broad lagoon with the self assurance of poetic Venice.

This road also goes through the famous Pine Forest, La Pineta, that has stood for over fifteen hundred years, being at various times extolled by Dante, Boccaccio, Byron, and as we both know, Dryden. Indeed, it was under this green canopy that Dante derived inspiration for much of Francesca di Polenta. The Ravennese say he refused food and grieved for thirteen days after the hunchback worked his vengeance on the lovely girl and her brother-in-law admirer, which may have been both because he knew her as a child and because of the hospitable shelter her family offered after Italy had cast him off. These classic trees also sheltered beneath their umbrella tops another, perhaps a greater man, and under more tragic conditions.

During the unsuccessful insurrection of 1848-49, Garibaldi fled from Rome with 3,000 of his legions, slipped through the armies of Austria and France camping about the city, and escaped to San Marino. The Sammarinese took them in with open arms, and next morning, seeing the enemy below their town, prepared for a siege. Older heads, however, urged the great leader to give up, since papal sway once

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more mastered the country, and they even went so far as to secretly arrange terms of surrender. When these terms, liberal enough, were made known, Garibaldi stepped before his men, crowded now in the cathedral square, and spoke:

"Comrades," he said, "I leave here to-night for Venice; those who wish to follow me march into the church." Only two hundred of all his army responded.

That night, with a trusty Sammarinese guide, the little band moved down the dizzy rock, taking one woman, Garibaldi's wife. She had never left him on this flight, and showed a fortitude little short of miraculous. But the Roman fever was upon her, and as they silently went she repeatedly fell. By daylight the refugees had reached the Pine Woods, and in its depths they halted. The woman was too ill to move, or to be moved. It was raining a cold drizzly rain, and quickly the soldiers raised a rough hut to shelter her; building it, indeed, about her as she lay supported by her husband. There for an hour they watched until life slipped out, and at the very instant her head fell back, and when the stricken general laid her down, cries of the Austrians in pursuit came echoing through the forest. So the corpse was left while the others took up their flight.

The Pine Woods of Ravenna watched the playing of many an historical tragedy. That hut has stood,

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"with windows overlooking the moat"

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a place revered by the Italian people, until two days ago when I saw in a Milan newspaper it had been destroyed by fire. Pobably a fanatic burned it, or more likely a tramp. But I'm running clear ahead of the route.

Going across the Augustus Cæsar bridge at Rimini, and over the Ansa which washes the old walls, you will hardly be conscious of having left the city before coming upon Bellaria, a place that can be dismissed without regret. Not that I want to slander it! It would be interesting enough in an American exposition, but is mediocre in Italy.

As far as Marina the country offers less beauty and variation of landscape than anything we have thus far experienced, but Casantico and Cervia, especially the latter, give one a little treat. This place of 1,600 people resembles a miniature town set in a toy window. The old part is confined in a square space about equal to a city block and surrounded by four walls that have been honeycombed for residences with windows overlooking the moat—giving it very much the appearance of the Ponte Vecchio in Florence. An imposing brick arch gate guards the entrance on the south and hardly has one passed through this before he looks up to find himself just about emerging from the other gate leading out of town. One cannot help a feeling of surprise at being so quickly ushered from this metropolis, and

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is pleasantly reminded of the boy who went through college—in the front door and out of the back.

Beyond this wall, however, lives the overflow, lining a canal that comes this far inland from the sea. It was originally built for carrying salt, and you will still find the small black barges, piled high with glistening crystals, forming a picturesque bit of shipping; especially as they are interspersed here and there with a masted craft whose deep red or bright brown sails seem too pretty for anything like work. It is all worth half an hour's idling, and introduces one to some rare types of Italian beauty.

From here to Ravenna the road goes through those extensive rice fields lying south of the Po; through a country differing from pastoral scenes usual to Italy—although I can only judge as it appears this first part of November. To-day men were baling rice straw and loading it on fantastically painted wagons, lackadaisically drawn by immense, broad-horned, white oxen which seemed particularly vain of the little red tassels hanging between their eyes. When these beasts get tired they lie down, sometimes they lie down when they are not tired—but which ever way it is, the peasants sit by and wait with an abiding faith that sometime the load will again move on.

Although the crop has been harvested, there was occupation in plenty for the farmers' daughters, who

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"whose deep red or bright brown sails"

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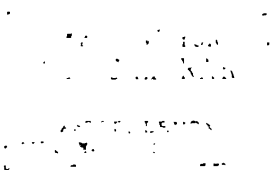

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tended flocks of turkeys turned in to feed upon the fallen grains. They were a rosy cheeked bevy; bare-legged, with skirts tied above their knees—for a rice field is a marshy spot. Turkeys are not extolled by the Italians as an article of diet, but they do appreciate the virtues of a vegetable called marrow—as a small boy we met bore testimony while gorging himself and copiously weeping between swallows, because so much was left to eat and his space wherein to put it so rapidly diminishing. In fact, this voracious little feeder gave us quite a turn when Brentheim, seeing he had got hold of a raw marrow and consumed half of it—to say nothing of our fears that he would momentarily burst asunder—alighted from the car to take the rest away. This brought about such a storm of wails that Italians came on a run from all directions, doubtless thinking we were kidnapers; nor did they thank the Count for his solicitude. At any signal the people in this country seem fairly to rise from the rocks.

During very wet weather this road is said to be flooded, but irrigation ditches are at such frequent intervals, and the crown itself being quite three feet above the fields, that I cannot feel apprehensive, or think it necessary to warn you against going across at inclement seasons.

Savis, at the river of that name, is the last town toward Ravenna, and saying this I have paid it suffi-

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cient compliment. About here begins the Pine Forest, and after leaving this behind, but while yet five kilometers from the former capital, one is confronted with his first sight—exhibit A—of the Romanesque-Byzantine. Its admirers dignify this church, the largest and best preserved of the basilicas still existing in the province, by the name of Sant' Appolinare in Classe Fuori, but, just between ourselves, it might so far as looks are concerned be called a tobacco barn in Bourbon County, Kentucky.

Built about the middle of the sixth century, and afterwards belonging to a Camaldolensian monastery, it has suffered some pretty hard knocks, and perhaps I ought to go easy with it. For when a church has stood so long that one mosaic and one stone floor have been successively laid upon an original floor of exquisite mosaic—a condition unearthed by accident within a very recent time—the place is at least venerable, if not a thing of beauty. And such is the case here. Moreover, during the middle ages, this huge structure stood so long untenanted and detached from human intercourse, that every now and then when a count or duke or senator wanted to build a villa, and did not feel quite up to the expense of buying material, he would send a bevy of varlets down there to tear out the necessaries. After everyone else had helped himself, our friend, Sigismund Malatesta, came along and took what remained. So to-day the

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"and produces some rare types of Italian beauty"

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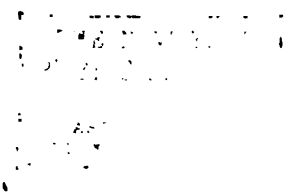

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interior looks like a plucked fowl, with really but one splendid feature remaining: the twenty-four monoliths of cipollino marble that support the roof. I've no doubt in the world that these would have been subsidized could the vandals have dodged the roof when it fell in. St. Appolinare himself lies in the crypt. Of course he was left. And scattered about the aisles are six or eight interesting sarcophagi, for which the gallant Sigismund had no use—being at that time too occupied with very much alive people.

We left the church a little saddened by our first contact with the Romanesque-Byzantine, but with the interesting discovery that we had come to a country of round campaniles. I know of no place in Italy, except around Ravenna, where the campaniles are without exception built in this form. Also it is a country of beardless Christs. In whatever way he was portrayed, in however numerous stages from early manhood to the crucifixion, no figure which we saw showed a beard—except in the mosaic dome of the baptistery in the city itself, the Baptistery of the Orthodox.

This represented his immersion in the Jordan, and pictured the style of beard commonly used by painters. An unusual pagan touch appears here in the River-God of Jordan, portrayed as a merman, sporting on a gold background and looking very much pleased. Encircling this center piece are the twelve apostles

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on a blue ground, and the whole dome is the best, as well as the most ancient, mosaic in Ravenna.

But few things are pleasure unalloyed, and even beneath this masterpiece a disappointment came; for, after walking backward into my crutches and twisting my neck at an excruciating angle in order to get a good view of Judas up there among the chosen, I found that he did not have a hunchback or deformity, not even a wart on his nose, to suggest disfigurement. My childhood belief had vanished! Judas looked just like other men!

The keeper of this two storied, octagonal structure whose floor has been filled in ten feet by the drifting dust of patient centuries, informed us that originally it was built for a Roman bath, but later on, in 449, converted to Christian uses. Perhaps I cannot grasp the wide scope of this term, "Christian uses," neither do I know what the Ravennese looked like in 449, but, judging from several I saw to-day, the edifice might serve a more useful purpose as a bath than a baptistery. Brentheim does not agree with me in this. He says that a little wash is better than no wash at all—but the Count has a harsh way of putting things at times.

Yet I forgot his cynicism—I forgot everything in the world but you—on entering San Vitale. Not so much on account of this octagonal, ornate church being built over the very spot where Saint Vatalis suf-

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"gorging himself and copiously weeping"

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fered martyrdom, as for an appreciation to me more sacred; because where nave and transepts cross is a striking likeness to St. Sofia—that exquisite mosque you and I entered in stocking feet, just like two genuine beggar Mohammedans, and, coming out, found that someone had walked off with your shoes. Will I ever forget the storm I brought upon myself for suggesting that a heathen priest had taken them back to be placed among the relics? To this day I have not forgiven you for turning my pretty speech into a slander on your footgear.

To an awakening mind in matters of architecture like my own, this San Vitale can be nothing but the King of Italian Byzantines. Perhaps I have mentioned that some of the church floors we saw to-day had been torn up in sections to show the buried mosaic work of earlier periods; and in one of these holes I came near taking a fall, so for this reason my eyes were lowered until we got well inside. This, by the way, is a good method of getting a thrill in San Vitale, because looking up for the first time from a position directly under the dome, one can scarcely suppress an exclamation of wonder.

Following the outside plan of construction, the interior is divided by eight huge pillars that support the dome, and between these are semi-circular niches two stories high of columns and arches that go up to small half domes which sort of empty out into the big one

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—made, by the way, of earthen vessels. Deal gently, gracious Polly, with my description of Byzantine! The church barker pointed all this out to me, and I have simply taken his word for it. Everywhere is mosaic of the goldest gold and the brightest bright! When a crack appears between two stones, or the mortar falls from around a window sill, do they plaster it up systematically and right? Not in Ravenna! They put in mosaic.

The domes are mosaic, the choir is mosaic. In life size is Christ surrounded by mosaic angels; St. Vitalus and St. Ecclesius, with the architectural plans of the church; Emperor Justinian with the Archbishop Maximian and attendants, and the Empress Theodora with the ladies of her court are all mosaic. The city of Jerusalem and the town of Bethlehem come next, and the four Evangelists, of whom Isaac and Jeremiah were the only names we could understand because our guide stuttered. Three angels entertained by Abraham, the sacrifice of Isaac, and Sarah at the door; an altar with bread and wine, Moses as a shepherd, and Moses taking off his shoes before the burning bush—all, all mosaic. Then our guide pointed to the mosaic apostles, the mosaic saints Gervasius and Protasius, the mosaic blood sacrifices of Abel, and the mosaic bloodless offering of Melchizedek. We left him trying to say Melchizedek—for, as I say, he stuttered uncommonly well.

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At any rate, I flatter myself to have at last fixed the Byzantine type: it is to Renaissance what a brass band is to an orchestra. Brentheim's comparison is a bit more drastic, but then Brentheim is over touchy on the subject.

Of course you must go to see the mausoleum of the fair Galla Placadia and the Duomo. Dante's tomb stands in a thickly populated district just across a narrow street from where he lived; and the mausoleum of Theodoric the great, a two storied structure of decagonal shape in the style of ancient Roman tombs, capped with a single block of Istrian rock thirty-six feet in diameter and weighing one million pounds, is, in itself, worth the trip. When the orthodox Christian church came along and wanted a place in which to worship, they scattered the old heretic's ashes and subsidized his house. He didn't care, and it showed such a sweet spirit on our part!

You scold me for being cynical at times, but I was made so by the early persecutions of our faith. Those Romans, who tried so hard to keep us in pagan darkness, were the epitome of cruelty, and it is a pity they could not have lived until the middle ages when we held the reins, to see how tenderly our churchmen boiled the heretics in sweet oil—sickening sweet, it was!

And, oh, my dearest Polly, we boil people in the same stuff to-day, every day, but it goes by a less

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uncivilized name, and is intended to scald only the more delicate part of them—their characters!

Forgive this mood, but there is ample reason. Brentheim got a letter from you to-day, which he admits to be about me, and yet he will divulge no word of its contents. What are you and the Count hatching up? This sort of thing makes me feel like playing checkers in the rain—most uncomfortable, I assure you.

Good-night.

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"Dante's tomb is in a thickly populated distirct"

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XI

RAVENNA TO FLORENCE

FROM Ravenna this morning we decided to take a westward course straight through to Florence, crossing our former trail at Forli, where four days ago we passed en route from Bologna to Rimini. The twenty-six miles to Forli, most of the way following the low banks of the Ronco, starts out through the same sort of rice fields and finishes in a country but slightly higher. It is not wildly interesting, but restful, and comforting because one knows he is leaving the land of round campaniles; and I am glad to say good-by to those overground cistern affairs that forever reminded me of American silos. Not that I mean to slander American silos, which have the beauty of usefulness highly developed, but now we are in Italy.

Just one town lies along this route, and 'twould be interesting to know how it happened to get there—surely not on purpose. Its name is Coccolia. I had previously looked in some of the road guides for its population and the more I looked, the more determined I became to find out, so we stopped to inquire; and hardly have I the heart to tell you that its population was sitting before his door smoking a cigarette.

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But there is too much beauty ahead to dwell upon the first few miles; however, I must drop a hint about Forli—the largest town between Ravenna and Florence. Here, perhaps, you should stop for luncheon, and you will have a choice between two hotels. Having been to each, I advise you to put both names in a hat, draw out one and go to the other; for you are certain to leave hungry in either case. And yet, if you go by the alternate route to Florence—that is, through Faenza—you will have only one hotel from which to choose.

Were the hour convenient you might try Coccolia—if you could find the inhabitant. Brentheim thinks it possesses two inhabitants because he saw two distinct characters of apparel lying on the grass to dry. Certain it is that a meal there should possess some virtue, since a place of its size could not even accommodate a very large disappointment.

In order to get the best of this run, Forli should be left behind not later than one o'clock, both because the mountain road is too dangerous to navigate after dark, and—your general direction being west—a high sun is preferable to the afternoon glare.

Practically from the Adriatic the grade is so slight that for some distance beyond Forli you will be but sixty meters above sea level. When the climb does begin, however, it leads to the sky, and your route develops into anything you choose to call it—always

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"an old man bent and crooked, wearing a long cape"

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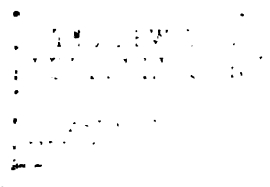

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dizzy, in many instances terrifying—requiring a steady driver and a good car.

In this wilderness nestles the little town of Terra del Sole, with a perfect dream of a ruined castle towering above it, and immersed in such poetic grandeur that we stopped for a better understanding.

There seems to be but one street in Terra del Sole, and this, beginning at the northeast gate, describes a course very much like the monogram of some crowned head, finally emerging at the southwest gate. The people, crowding about us with smiles and friendly interest, cooled when questioned about the castle, and glances—furtive, frightened glances—were exchanged as some of the women, crossing themselves, turned away. Their behavior did not escape Brentheim, either, so we ordered the chauffeur on, seeing nothing could be gained by tarrying.

At this juncture, however, a bent old man and crooked, wearing a long cape, one end of which had been tossed about his neck like a scarf, came forward with a polite bow. Might he be so bold, he said, to ask the gentlemen if they would take him to the next town, Castrocaro? The climb was wearisome, he explained, yet he must go. Of course we took the old chap aboard and had hardly got out upon the road before he leaned quickly forward, addressing me in pure Italian—unlike what is usually heard in provincial towns.

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"Signors, the people of Sole," he said, "do not often speak of the castle Gravia. You will understand why some turned to their homes after hearing your questions," and here his look became apologetic, "when they perceived the Signor had suffered a temporary accident."

This showed the Italian gentleman! He hesitated to notice my crutches at all, but, being compelled to do so on account of his story, chose to consider them merely a passing encumbrance. No wonder people love the genuine Italian heart—I mean the better side of it!

Boiled down the tale was this: The castle and town had been built in the middle of the eighth century by the Lombard duke, Aistulph. The latter he gave entirely to the scattered peasants for their own use, but the castle, while completed, remained empty for five years, although furnished with sumptuous luxury. One day Aistulph arrived with a guard of a hundred soldiers, all of whom were deaf and mute, and who received his commands by signs. The only other person of apparent rank was a girl, heavily veiled, who sat on a white horse beside him. In the train were also twenty Ethiopian slave men, like the soldiers deaf and dumb, but horribly disfigured. Reaching the castle gate these entered with the beautiful lady, while the much feared duke and his attendants, after a punctilious salute, turned

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"a ruined castle towering above it"

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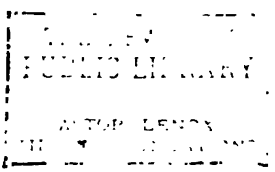

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and rode away. Nor were they ever again seen.

For years she dwelt alone, sad, yet never weeping; and once a day at evening came unveiled upon the rampart to gaze into the reddening sky. Though great in distance from the town below, her beauty possessed such a magic charm that every one who looked could see each delicate line of her face, like an ivory miniature held in the hand; but also to those who looked a like sadness came, and never again could they smile. Therefore Sole grew into a town of grave faces and mourning; the children moaned but never laughed, and the houses were hung with dank, gray moss.

One day a gallant young knight dashed up in shining armor, straight to the castle, where he stopped and blew a long blast from a hunting horn. Overhead a thunder storm was gathering which, as he sat there waiting, burst with a seething flash that ripped the gate asunder; whereupon he rode in. During the early morning hours he came forth, lightly springing his charger over the ruined gate, galloping through the town, this time with raised visor before the astonished people, and lo! instead of being a knight, it was the beautiful face of the mourning lady; no longer sad, but wreathed with smiles which flashed doubly sweet from the riot of gorgeous hair that framed her face. And from that day forward sorrow was unknown in Sole.

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Later in the same afternoon, the twenty deformed Ethiopians marched out upon the road with slow, feeling steps, carrying in a litter the handsome knight, shorn of his armor, whose legs had been terribly broken; and never again would he walk. Then within an hour the castle fell to ruins, just as it is standing to-day, and superstition has it that if ever the knight returns, the blessing of happiness will depart from Terra del Sole.

"That, Signor," concluded our guest, with an apologetic look in my direction, "is why some of the people turned away their eyes when they beheld your crutches. Unto this day it is said that just before a death, or pestilence, the vision of the lame man is seen."

As Doc Peets would say, this tale "gave me the fantods" and I haven't yet determined whether the old rogue invented it just to please us or whether it is a true fragment of Apennine lore. At any rate, he earned his lift and it fitted in nicely with the day.

Before leaving Terra del Sole, I would call your attention to the town walls, especially on the southwest side. Here you will find perhaps the most classic example of its kind anywhere in Italy, corresponding exactly with pictures where artists have combined upon one canvas the romance of every old wall they have seen. I suggest this because it is probable that not one motorist in a hundred passing this

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"one bursts right in upon little Castorcaro"

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way has noticed it, and hardly a hundred motorists pass in a year.

Swinging and skidding around curves that do not show a hundred feet of road ahead, one bursts right in upon little Castrocaro as though saying "boo!" Indeed, from an absolute wilderness we looked up to find ourselves in the heart of a town whose only street, like that in Sole, pointed impartially to everyone's front door, but beyond this, and the fact that it does not display a statue of Garibaldi, the place is in no way unusual. Surprises were waiting at Dovedola, a unique settlement snuggled in a quarry-like pocket of sandstone five hundred feet deep, which has been cut into all sorts of fantastic shapes by the Montone river, aided by rains and melting snows. From here on, also, you will cross this stream several times, finally bidding it a hasty good-by near St. Benedetto in Alpe when the road takes a course where even water dares not flow. Pray excuse the extravagance; you will, after having crossed the Apennines by this route.

For the next eleven kilometers the rise is thirteen hundred feet, and is a matter of intermediate and low speeds for even the best of motors. The only animal life I saw from here to the summit was a group of thin men and a flock of thin goats. The men were bundled in hairy capes, for indeed it was getting very cold. The foliage was turning brown and orange,

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like the sails of those boats which ply the Adriatic shore, and occasionally the sun struck a piece of ice that flashed back every color of the spectrum. Worming and twisting our way up into the clouds, the chauffeur's whole body swaying with his effort to negotiate the curves, skirting precipices that are eloquent of grandeur, one draws a deep sigh of satisfaction when, at the very top, Passo di San Godenzo is reached, three thousand feet above the sea.

For the whole thing has been terrifying, glorifying, satisfying! Like San Marino, no one can describe it. Who can picture the grandeur of the Riviera, or a sunset, or a starlit sky, when everyone sees it and feels it in a different way?

The descent is really more thrilling, but by this time one has become somewhat accustomed to thrills. The westward slope drops nearly two thousand feet in six and a half miles, and looking down, it seems incredible that only one road can make such a lot of convolutions as appear beneath you. Brentheim said it looked like a snake with delirium tremens and I let it go at that, being unable to think of anything more twisty. At one place it seems possible to toss a stone right upon the roofs of San Godenzo town, which by road is nine and a half kilometers.

While approaching this little place one is treated to a curious impression, for its campanile—the only high feature about it—appears from time to time in

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"from a very pretty girl who stands beneath the arch"

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almost every point of the compass, repeatedly deceiving the tourist into believing that he is about to descend upon an entirely different town. After leaving it behind this deception still obtains, but now each time you look it will have climbed higher and higher into the sky.

When Sambavello is passed the road will permit a little speed, but be careful in approaching Pontassieve, twenty-three kilometers, that your driver asks directions to Florence, for here other roads come in; and also you might buy a flower from a very pretty girl who stands beneath the arch.

And now you are again down in the peaceful valley, among soft-toned villas which suggest that your trip through mountain crags and angry winds must indeed have been a fantastic dream. So, wondering at the vastness of nature, the ingenuity of man, and the loveliness of just one girl who was with me in thought throughout the entire way, I beheld Florence, home of Beatrice, smiling and waiting to receive me. Good-night.

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XII

FLORENCE

HAD you been with me this afternoon upon a hill outside of Florence and watched her twinkling eyes laughing at the golden west, you would have said as I did: "Peace be with you!" Its charm to-day, while I stood above the ruined Roman amphitheater and baths at Fiesole, appeared like a reflected grandeur of the dead past, which in the fiery glow seemed once more rising and passing across the valley in a misty promenade. The ancient walls, the ancient bridges, cathedral, baptistery and galleries, were in fancy thronged with people of the doublet, hose and rapier day, or at times the sinking sun would cast still farther back into the centuries to rest upon the sheen of armored men. But throughout all, and to the most modern of its present villas, is a path of inellectuality, so clearly and yet so weirdly intermixed with feud and intrigue, that one feels it is at once a place to love and fear.

Some of these villas have no equal, not even at your blessed Como! For there the landscape effects, planting, terracing and converting natural slopes into places of a thousand fancies, cannot exist for lack

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"the ruined baths and amphitheatre at Feisole"

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of space. True, Florence has no lake—but it is Florence! And true indeed it is as Leo wrote: "Like a water lily rising on the mirror of the lake rests on this lovely ground still more lovely Florence, with its everlasting works and its inexhaustible riches!"

I shall tell you none of its charms, lest your expectancy soar too high. But when you come, go into the cathedral at dusk. At first you will wonder what it is about this place so strangely empty that seems to touch you with ineffable charm. You see no chapels, no altars of any sort, or tinsel, or even carving on the floor. No pew seats are in the nave, no paintings on the main walls, and you might feel a slight tinge of disappointment were there not some overwhelming impulse to stop and hold your breath. Then raise your eyes aloft and read the answer. Proportion! Nothing but proportion—poetic, grand, sublime! For, up in the darkening roof, where pillars rise and spread into Gothic arch-forms that might be supporting giant lilies were it light enough to see—and the efforts of a day near spent to penetrate the heavy windows, leaving a lingering touch on some marble high-light—and a quiet so absolute that your pulses slow, and you yourself seem turned into a figure of warm stone—all, all produce a memory that shall last. I believe that any unexpected contact with a sublime force stirs the most treasured impulse in one's nature, and so, in that silent twilight, my hand left its

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hold upon the crutch and reached out, pleading for the pressure of your own. And I felt as I sometimes fancy certain flowers must feel when the mistress of the garden walks their way. Do the roses lean out nearer that they may not be passed unseen? Do those which have grown crooked weep in the long and bitter nights because of a blight that has robbed them of a love caress?

Of course there are thousands of things to see and marvel at from the Ponte Vecchio to the walls, but your guide book will tell you of these. One very recent attraction, however, that our two year old Baedeker did not mention is the museum of the late Frederick Stibbert, Englishman. Mr. Stibbert lived here collecting the best relics from all parts of the world and housing them in his charming villa which adjoins that of the Countess Fabbricotti. His death three years ago revealed a greater affection for his foster home than Florentines imagined, for he left the villa and wonderful museum to the city.

Not until then did Florence realize, or even dream, what it possessed. You must see to understand. The armors, alone, that are worn by well executed dummies both afoot and mounted on fiery chargers —dozens, whole companies of them in line of parade —are in themselves the best chosen and best exploited collection I have seen in any country; and if you aren't interested in these—for most girls seem not to be—you will find almost everything else to suit your

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"like a reflected grandeur of the dead past"

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aesthetic fancy from antique kitchen utensils to costly fans and brocades.

Throughout Italy, dealers in antiques—never so very slow in trade—are coming to the front with the true American spirit, and this seems particularly so here. Many of them search the hotel registers, and a day or so after arriving, you will find a few politely phrased invitations to visit certain studios—a genteel name they apply to curiosity shops. No abundance of bargains in things of this line are encountered nowadays, and one must keep a watchful eye lest his purchase of a verde antique does not turn out to be white marble cleverly stained green. I have been told there are private schools which exclusively teach the art of these deceptions, and I blush to say that the American purse has had much to do with bringing this about.

Among our other wanderings we drove some twenty kilometers to the villa Poggio, last occupied by the morganatic wife of Emanuel I. Originally this belonged to Francesco I, and his brilliant, unscrupulous and every-thing-else-naughty wife, Bianca Capello. Neither was Francesco an innocent, for that matter. Being the son of Cosimo I, inheriting thereby the brutal Sforza inclinations from one parent, and the suave Medicean astuteness from the other, would, to a student of eugenics, promise a variety of things. They all blossomed in Francesco, and if I may be indulged this once, let me remark in

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passing that he and Bianca were a darling pair of buds. It was here they arranged the neat plot to kill Francesco's brother, Cardinal Ferdinand. Brentheim dug out a lot of new facts about that affair, new, at least, as to the part Pellegrini played.

Pellegrini was Bianca's daughter by a previous marriage, and tradition has it that she was the most beautiful girl in or around Florence. A portrait of her hangs in the villa, and I can well believe what tradition says.

About this time Ferdinand was thwarting Bianca's schemes at almost every turn. She had tried in many ways to win his allegiance but, failing in this, directed every effort to arousing her husband's suspicion of him—a thing easy enough to do since Francesco, being already jealous, only wanted a good excuse to put him out of the way. It seems there were other family matters needing adjustment.

This finally culminated in an attempt to poison him at a banquet. He was known to be fond of a certain dish cooked with rice and curry, so for an agreeable surprise Bianca planned to have this especially prepared. A limited number of guests were invited; these being people about whom she felt reasonably sure, for powerful as she believed herself to be it was no mean joke to kill a cardinal; hence the picked witnesses who might obligingly perjure themselves if she made it worth their while.

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"go into the Cathedral at dusk"

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Pellegrini overheard this plot. She had been asleep on a couch when her mother and Francesco entered and began talking it over. Being dusk, and they themselves somewhat agitated, she was not observed; and she, being wise, did not move. But the young girl suffered a terrible shock. Not only had there arisen in her a feeling of revulsion for Bianca and of hate for her stepfather, but the Cardinal had been her confidant in the most treasured secret of her life. To him she had confided her love for Iannicelli Martini, an accomplished young artist of promise whose studio was in the nearby town, and he had listened with sympathetic approval. So the priest was dear to her and, now that he stood in danger, she set about devising a plan to warn him.

But this was no easy task because he had gone to Florence, and would not come out until the day of the fatal dinner. When you go to this villa you will see a long marble balcony on one side overlooking the gardens. Upon this Pellegrini came after the household was asleep, and with a rope she had secreted indoors let herself to the ground. Moving quickly, she reached the town and at last ascended the rickety stairs to Iannicelli's studio.

Here her heart nearly stopped. She had risked discovery at home, faced imaginary terrors in the deep moon shadows of the adjoining forest, but this last was too much! For it must be remembered that

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while the young artist had never told Pellegrini of his love, she guessed it by a process known alone to your sex.

Medicean followers also occupied the house where he lived, and she knew it would be the height of folly to knock, since, should others be awakened, her discovery would spell ruin. Therefore, after timid rappings had produced no effect upon the slumberer, she found the latch and entered. What he thought when his eyes opened upon this beautiful girl, kneeling in a strip of moonlight by his bed and holding a finger to her pretty lips, is not recorded. At any rate, before the stars began to pale, she went back into the forest where he soon followed, and after helping her up to the gallery, hastened Florenceward.

At last came the fatal day. The table was a long affair with Bianca and Francesco seated side by side at one end, while the Cardinal graced the other, and twelve or fifteen guests were placed upon each side. The hostess, as was her wont, drank copiously, but tipsy or sober her *savoir faire* never failed. Some of the best wits of the countryside were present; a scholar of note from Florence—and all devoted admirers of Bianca.

When half through the sumptuous food, Ferdinand saw a servant enter bearing a richly carved gold dish which he at once suspected was the potion, and then began to play his part. Having previously

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given Pellegrini a reassuring look, he now sat in silent meditation, letting his eyes rest upon his hand on whose first finger was a handsome signet ring. While the curried rice stood steaming and untouched before him, Bianca made a graceful speech, modestly —or with well affected modesty—confessing that his tastes were always present in her thoughts, and therefore to please her she hoped he would eat. But Ferdinand's gaze remained glued to the ring.

"What is it," she gayly asked, "that so distracts you?"

"I thought it was changing color," he said, looking up with a puzzled expression. "I do not understand, for surely there is no danger to me here!" Francesco paled, but Bianca seemed equal to the occasion.

"How could there be danger among friends, dear Ferdinand! Your ring has you bewitched!" And the others laughed.

"I can well believe it," he replied, smiling now, "but, knowing its history, for the moment I was startled," and he took up a spoon, seeming about to eat, when just what he had expected to happen did happen—that is, someone asked for this history.

"The ring," he said, "has been handed down through a long line of nobles, the first of whom received it from divine source. One night when one of these princes and his friends were dining with a beautiful lady in a far-off country, an itching at-

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tacked his finger and, looking down, he saw the stone changing color."

Once more he lifted the spoon, but was interrupted by loud clamors from the merry company to proceed. He was playing a lively tune on the feelings of Bianca and Francesco, and looking up indulged in a low laugh, adding:

"The noble warned his friends against the dish, so the lady first ate of it and—"

Again he bowed over his curried rice, and again the spoon had just reached his lips when the full story was demanded. Whereupon he wrought a tale so artfully aimed at the conspirators that Bianca's nerves strained to a snapping point and Francesco's face looked shiny green beneath the flickering torches. Each time the Cardinal raised his spoon they held their breaths, and each time he put it down untouched they almost shrieked—for it is no easy matter to remain composed when dallying with a human life. Both felt that some trickery was here, but were unable to comprehend its trend; yet she arose to the occasion by demanding the dish brought to her, gayly crying that the noblemen were milksops and, were she a man before whom food had been placed by dainty fingers, she would eat of it even though poison screamed at her—which was the twelfth century way of saying that no one could call her bluff.

This encouraged fresh bursts of laughter from her

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guests, and the Cardinal joining in their humor, arose with the stuff and started around the table. She saw the unmistakable menace behind his smiling eyes, which her own were now crossing and flashing like rapier blades, and realized that only her coolness could save the day.

"Do let me," she laughed prettily. "Do let me eat first!"

With a bob-tail flush Bianca could have won the earth.

"By all means," he replied, passing behind their chairs, "and Francesco shall share it with you."

Quickly drawing two poniards he pressed their points to the culprits' necks, and now for the first time the company saw a tragedy was on the boards.

In silence they saw Bianca flinch from the blade, gasp and bow to her inevitable doom; likewise the trembling Francesco. In speechless horror the gentle Pellegrini's eyes were riveted on each mouthful of the deadly food going in turns down her mother's and stepfather's throats, until these would-be-assassins fell to the floor in the agony of death. Then she fainted.

Recovering consciousness in her own room, she was told that Francesco the First had passed away, and early next morning Bianca died. Then came the Cardinal saying to the stricken girl that the estates were hers, that she was beloved by the church and

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should marry the handsome Iannicelli. But this she refused, explaining that these cherished things must be renounced forever to expiate the tragic result of her information. Women are a curious lot. The Cardinal seemed little complimented by this lack of enthusiasm over his own escape—but a man's wounded conceit does not come into this story. It would take up too much space.

The long and short of it all was that Pellegrini ate nothing from that day forth, and died young. The unsigned portrait of her I saw in Poggio was probably painted by the sorrow-stricken Martini just after she had been lain in the Campo Santo, and when he was preparing to leave Italy forever.

As we returned from this blood soaked spot, and stopped a moment on the hills above the city, looking off to the valley of the Arno that lay in a sunset haze, it all seemed so peaceful, so soft and quiet in the golden glow, that I wondered how Dante could have hurled the force of his bitterest denunciation against it—Florence, gentle in name, home of Beatrice! Seeing her thus at eventide, I could not believe she was ever: " . . . a viper turned against the breast of her mother; a sick sheep that contaminates the whole flock!"

One wonders at those days when she withstood the fierce assaults of the 7th Henry. One's eyes seek the spot where three hundred Guelph and Ghibelline

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"from the Ponte Vecchio to the walls"

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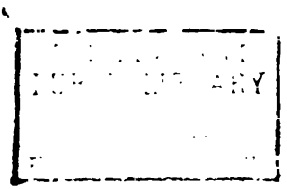

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leaders, yielding to the passionate entreaty of Gregory, and led in person by his holiness, congregated on the Arno's sandy beach after a whole night of listening to his eloquence, to embrace under a blossoming dawn, thereby forever ending one of the most violent feuds in history.

Where now are the screaming strifes in commerce and war that once proclaimed her mistress of the world! Where the blood sacrifice and enduring toil which were thrown into the lists to make a single florin pass current throughout the Empire!

One looks across at the lonely tower of Galileo and marvels how a world of culture could have threatened a life for voicing a theory which our youngest school boys know. One's eyes search in vain for a trace of the terrifying Black Plague that in five months took a hundred thousand of her children—when, too, the great Valloni died!

Nothing now remains but peace; peace and beauty, and one instinctively breathes the prayer: "God deal gently with her who has suffered much." Only by one way could I love her more: that she were named for you, sweet lady. Good-night.

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XIII

FLORENCE TO PISA

DO not be discouraged from taking this part of the trip if I tell you the roads are bad. They may not be bad when you come through; the hotel men told me they were better last week, but to-day they were very bad—very bad, indeed.

I'm a bit ashamed of Italy after our ninety-eight kilometer run to Pisa, and to make matters worse, this northern of the routes that goes through Prato, Pistoia, Buggiano and Lucca was said to have the preference. We are wondering to-night what the other could be like. The Count is disgusted, but that is because he had never seen a really bad road. How can a chap, raised on Austrian highways, know anything but smooth travel—even were he not a count? I've been over others forty times worse in some parts of America, but that in no way excuses Italy.

And there is something else I am wondering about to-night—another letter which he has received from you. But no feeling of jealousy comes in here. God forbid, and grant that I were big enough to recognize the impossible; welcoming your happiness with

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someone else, since the decree is that I cannot ask you to find it with me.

Evidently there is nothing of a personal Brentheim in your correspondence with him—I feel sure of that, even though I sometimes wish it were otherwise. He laughs at me in the most tantalizing way about your letters, pretending they contain a great secret, and that you both have a wonderful surprise for me. Of course, I also have to laugh at his nonsense, although it brings me no nearer to the secret. However, he promises to tell me about it in Rome, and that is the best compromise I can make with him. Will you not be more merciful?

The interest and beauty of this run is well worth a little slow speed now and then, and a few bumps, for this western slope produces people of a decidedly different character. To see it at its best advantage one must of course leave the railways and even, sometimes, the highways.

You will go a trifle over ten kilometers before feeling that you have really left Florence, because, though perhaps not quite so numerous as to the east of the city, in this direction also, villas lie close along the route; villas with immaculate terraces guarded by mildewed statuary, which have a subtle power of making one want to go back and stay a while longer. Indeed, even in passing through Peretola, it seems as though winsome Florence, loathe to let you go, had

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run a ways down the road; either begging you to return, or, with a full heart, speeding you on your journey. But there comes a sweeping curve to the left, then one to the right, and lo! a magician waves his wand! You dash into the village of Campi Bisenzio, and the spirit of Florence has flown!

Here the inhabitants are industrious to the verge of laziness, and you will admit this paradox when knowing that from child to octogenarian they seem to do nothing but plait straws. Fingers fly so fast that it seems positively to resemble a form of hysterical scratching, but here the energy stops. The people sit before their homes, or lean carelessly against door jambs, or in small groups wander aimlessly about the streets; all the while gossiping in an idle way, stopping to gape at the passersby, stopping to look in the shop windows, or to pass a critical eye over a freshly killed veal being strung up by the local butcher, asking its price, perhaps ordering a small cut, yawning with open coarseness—but never, never, do the fingers falter for a single moment.

A girl about fifteen was lying flat on her back in a pile of straw, dumped carelessly in the street, and kicking her bare legs at a group of frolicking youngsters whose game seemed to consist of jumping up in the air and trying to land on her stomach. It was lively, and she had to squirm and kick a good deal more than young women generally do in public; sometimes bringing both knees quite up to her chin,

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"all are plaiting straws"

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and shooting her feet into the assailants with catapultic force,—but not once did the fingers cease their unfaltering duty. Had Dante passed this way another form of punishment would have enriched his Inferno—a continual, perpetual plaiting of straws, with never a pause.

The immediate result of this toil is rolls of straw braid—rooms, garrets, houses full of it; and the ultimate purpose is hats. Like beggars, and other undesirables, these nervous fingered people are not to be shaken off. They stroll along the restful highway as far as Prato, another rival in this industry. But here, also, a skillful lot of bakers live—the trade having been handed from father to son for many generations, and right royally well they carry it out. As the aroma of cheese floats through Casalpusterlengo, so does the delicate fragrance of bread hover about Prato, until one's appetite becomes a raving monster.

Our car shot over a small bridge crossing the Risenzio, rolled slowly up to a city wall of graceful proportions and stopped beneath the high arched gates. This arch is imposing in its modest brick way, but the feature which attracted me was that the solid wooden gates, with their heavy iron studding, were swung on greased hinges; suggesting that each night the people of little Prato lock tight her doors before going to bed. One man said yes, another said no, so we came to the conclusion that sometimes they do and sometimes they

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don't. The greased hinges, however, spoke with most conviction.

As I said, the smell of baking was in the air. Often have I thought that the smell of fresh turned earth on a bland spring day was the most delightful of all fragrances—but this has usually been just after breakfast. Sometimes to bury one's nose in a bunch of lilies of the valley is ecstasy, but this, too, has frequently been preceded by a hearty luncheon. When the harvest moon hangs in the sky, and the night is soft, one can all but lose his senses in the sensuous breath of magnolias from a distant grove, but that, of course, is after a long and tiresome dinner. The smell of smells, dear Polly, which is all these combined, is the smell of baking, crusting bread when inner man is empty.

From a woman's basket we picked the brownest rolls I ever saw. First I ate one for you, then, of course, one for myself; one for Brentheim followed, one for the chauffeur and for a few of my friends at home; and you need not leave the motor to have all this feast, with a bottle of red Chiante to wash it down. This is the Chiante country. Always drink the native wines wherever you happen to be, as it is too cheap to tempt the dealers to dilute it. As we were leaving, I ate another roll for you.

This obscure little place has a few art treasures of great interest. One might expect it, when con-

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from a woman's basket we picked the brownest rolls I ever saw"

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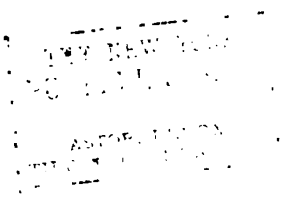

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sidering that about the time—or just before—Columbus was discovering America, numerous Florentine artists were making regular pilgrimages to Prato, drawn there by its sons, Lippi, Felippo, Fra Diamanti, and, probably the greatest of them all, Botticelli. Works of these, and others, are found in the Duomo, a dismal place that gives one the blues; and also in the little church of San Lodovico, the town hall, and the Madonna della Corceri. All are worth seeing.

In the Duomo, by the way, is the girdle the Virgin Mary used to wear. There isn't any doubt about this, because a mural painting over the door shows her handing it to St. Thomas, and any one can see it is the same one.

Personally, I like the Madonna della Corceri best, partly because its Greek-cross dome over the transepts speaks so eloquently of that struggling transition from early to high renaissance. Only one feature in it is grossly distasteful to me: the terra cotta frieze of the Evangelists by della Robbia. Every time I see a lot of people standing before a group of squeegeed, deformed, badly colored pottery figures, exclaiming, "What exquisitely delicious technique!" just because a red backed guide book says they are the products of della Robbia, I get aroused. There isn't a truly honest and cross-your-heart beautiful thing that della Robbia ever did—except per-

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haps one piece at the Portiuncula—and most of those who profess to admire him know in their hearts this is true; the others being afraid to disagree.

Before reaching San Pietro you will begin again to see the villa feature, and some of these are quite as attractive as anything near Florence. I cannot judge their interiors because we were neither persona grata nor did we have time to stop. It is worth your while, however, to leave the highroad to San Pietro, go about three kilometers north to Montale, and from there take the more obscure way to Pistoia. It is a good road and, though just a trifle longer, passes many of these villas which otherwise you must view from a distance.

We happened upon Pistoia when there was a market-day fair, and around the artistically fashioned street lights were grouped crude bazaars, presided over by gaudily dressed peasants breathing out the spirit of the Apennines. I was interested in seeing this town because here occurred the birth of pistols —as their name indicates. Here also Catiline was defeated sixty-two years before Christ, and from then on until after 1869 it contributed generously to every fight of any respectable size—its fiercest history being made in the middle ages when Italian soil was fertilized by Guelph and Ghibbelline blood. The campanile was built about that time as a fortified tower, and many a tale its stones could tell! Years

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"This is the Chiante country"

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afterward three tiers of arches in Pisan style were added, but the original part remains unchanged, and this combination gives a curious effect.

Of the churches I cannot advise you specifically because all are interesting. The cathedral's nave and aisles are set off by sixteen very graceful columns, and it would otherwise demand admiration had not some years ago a chap obtained permission to remodel it—and so spoiled it. Perhaps just as a building, you will find the Madonna dell' Umilta most attractive, for in this octagonal masterpiece, under a Vasari dome, are wonderfully graceful barrel vaulting and exquisite Corinthian wall pilasters. If you are interested in fragmentary pieces of frescoes, there are some in San Francisco al Prato at which critics do a lot of squinting—most of them having in some way to do with Franciscan history. And the pulpit in Sant' Andrea holds one for a reason other than beauty, because it is the work of Giovanni Pisano, son of Niccolo, that first great sculptor to appear on the horizon of Italy's intellectual dawn; he who adhered closely to ecclesiastical tradition, just as Dante portrayed ecclesiastical theology.

Your car will do some climbing around Serravalle, and, indeed, for quite a way toward Buggiano the road leads over hills charming in their blend of wild and tame. Villas, raised in the cream of refinement, overshadowed by massive castle ruins of the

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frenzied age, form a typical character of scenery which extends through to Pisa.

If your mother needs a rest, Buggiano would be a good stopping place—not just Buggiano, but Bagni di Montecatini, where the famous thermal and vapor baths have been patronized by society for twelve centuries. In fact, two of the present bathing establishments date from the time of Leopold I.

I will not venture to say how much benefit may be derived from these springs, or how many ailments they cure, but listen to what they did for Uguscione della Fagginola, the war governor of Pisa! His army, at this particular time crippled with disease, was drawn up one spring morning in the middle ages to meet the Florentine host, while the surrounding country looked on in mortal terror; because a defeat would mean bitter subjugation. Fear, also, had permeated the hearts of Fagginola's soldiers, who, although formed in battle array, were on the verge of deserting.

While the commander stood before them deeply conscious of their instability, a shepherd approached and whispered. It was not very polite, perhaps, but he did—and anyway, he was only a shepherd—so instantly an order rang out for them to advance. What the shepherd said was: "March your men through the springs, and the courage of the waters, entering their flesh, will drive the Florentines like a

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"around the artistically fashioned street lights were grouped crude bazaars"

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flock of sheep!" They waded, and almost exterminated the enemy.

I thought this too good a story to lose, because here was real folk lore, unbiased by anything—unaccountable to anything but fairies, and such is so rare in Italy that it charmed me. So I mentioned it to a priest who dined at our table that night, and what do you suppose he said! That on the eve of this battle a special service was being held before Fagginola's patron saint, and this brought about the victory.

That's always the way here, and the reason people can't have their little fairy tales so dear to childhood is because of a continual association of every romance with some saint. The priests would make Mother Goose a saint, not because of any particular regard for the good lady herself, but because they could not miss an opportunity of forcing the children to learn it that way. When the Vatican is moved to America, as is the growing belief among Italian clericals, shall we give up our nursery rhymes, I wonder?

Through all the country west of Pistoia you will be struck by the number of barefooted people, and not that the farms and homes seem poorer than elsewhere, either. Horses receive less than their usual consideration (which is never excessively generous in Italy) and the public vehicles we met between towns were invariably overcrowded; in one instance fourteen passengers with small luggage being drawn

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by a single animal. Old women, young mothers, girls, and children of the rural districts were for the most part bare from the knees down, and it may be a significant fact, nor do I endorse it, that here also are a greater number of priests than anywhere we have been. With all due respect to their reverences, some of them do not seem to be any more careful about their appearance than a high type of American hobo, and surely cleanliness cannot be considered next to godliness in the region between Pistoia and Lucca.

There's a place for you—Lucca! Yet before reaching it, your road must suddenly change direction at Buggiano, going northeast and skirting the Apennines to Pescia on a river of that name. Commercially, Pescia's 12,000 inhabitants are recognized for their paper and silk manufactories, and artistically they are snubbed. You might like the old façade on the cathedral; Brentheim raved over it, but personally I leaned toward a monument of Baldassare Turini. Of the other churches here, San Francesco and Sant' Antonio are—churches.

In these, however, are frescoes of interest much as the pulpit in Pistoia is interesting: not alone because of the work but of the master. One is by Giotto, a close friend of Dante's, a wonderful painter, sculptor, architect, who dominated the Italian school and was perhaps the ugliest, as well as the wittiest man of his day. He, Dante and the Pistoia poet, Sini-

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"three tiers of arches in Pisan style were added"

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baldi, met frequently for long discussions, and it seems a pity no phonograph was there to make a record. It is told of Giotto that, while painting the King of Naples, his majesty said:

"Giotto, if I were you I would not work so hard!" To which the artist quickly replied: "Neither would I —were I you!"—so pleasing the king that he gave the wit a handsome present, although I do not think the joke good enough to have lived these six hundred and fifty years.

It seems as though the road now develops a form of hysteria, for it shoots straight south, then due west, and at last calms into a series of restful curves through a country picturesque to a rare degree. Every hill is covered with some ruin—truly such a number of antique castles, in such a setting, I have never before been fortunate enough to see. Beyond them, like skulking giants, peep the high distant peaks of the Albano mountains; not seeming to rise up very much, but enough to keep an eye on you over the nearer Apennines. One feels that if they got right hungry they might reach over any moment and—well!

But now you even forget this grandeur when entering Lucca, and I cannot explain just why this is. Perhaps it is that ineffable charm about the place which takes hold—and satisfies. This may lie in a consciousness of its past importance, for after

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the Romans conquered Lucca nearly two centuries before Christ they began to make a place of it. Still a hundred years later, when Julius Cæsar was governor of Gaul, he called Pompey and Cassius for several conferences here, and each time they came together was the signal for great circuses.

The splendor of Lucca at that time is inconceivable to our twentieth century mind, as the remnant of an enormous Roman ampitheater bears partial testimony. Yet almost every vicissitude of changing dynasty and war befell this town, until its crowning mortification came when Napoleon gave it away to his sister, Elisa; just gave it away as you would give an old hat to your maid—if you would!

You can dig up the churches without any suggestion from me, but see, above the Madonna with four saints in the sacristy of San Martino, a Pieta supposed to be an early piece by Michael Angelo. The two canvases that most pleased me were a Fra Bartolomeo, Madonna with an angel and saints, and Tintoretto's "Last Supper"—though near this latter hangs a "Resurrection" by a local painter that would be a masterpiece had his brush possessed finesse equal to his imagination.

Brentheim hurried at once to the Duomo, both because of our desire to see the curious exterior in tiers of differently carved pillars, and its towering campanile, but also the monument of Ilaria del Corretto

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"hurried to the Duomo and its towering campanile"

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which some writer has extolled to the skies. The exterior quite met our expectations, and so might the monument had its sculptor been more of an artist, and age not eaten off part of Ilaria's nose and fingers. These early renaissance works are not genuinely good, and contemporaneous statuary by the German and French seems far superior.

As we came out into the square a curious procession was passing—a funeral of the Misericordia. When the plague swept over Italy this quaint society was organized to see that everyone received a proper burial, instead of being left to rot in rooms or alleyways, and at that time the funerals were held at night. Terrifying days they were, when it was an even bet that one of every two persons met upon the street would be dead within twenty-four hours, and a five to three shot that both would go.

Under such conditions, when corpses were thrown from windows by terrified families and abandoned by the city guards, brave men of both noble and bourgeois classes formed into this society for public good. Partly because they preferred to remain unknown, and to throw a mystery about their order so that people would be frightened into reporting deaths the moment they occurred, and also in the hope of themselves escaping contagion when in actual contact with the cadaver, they adopted a long black robe with pointed hood and mask, so that only the eyes were

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visible through two narrow slits. For several centuries this order has existed, though happily not for the same purpose; neither do they now bury at night, but the weird costume has remained unchanged.

To-day twelve black, ghoulish figures, preceding a simple black hearse followed by two other black gowned men, constituted the procession which crossed the square. For when the Misericordia bury their dead no mourners are permitted, no family, no friends outside of the order.

Later on, Brentheim got one of these gentlemen to unmask and stand for his picture. At that time he was carrying a box and making collections for the poor. A distinctive fact about this society is that while organized partly with the intention of working on public superstition for a general public good (just as our Kuklux Klan was first conceived) it never deteriorated into a means of private revenge, but throughout all time has held itself to noble principles.

You might stop by a picture gallery in the Palazzo Provinciale on account of two paintings by Brother Bartolomeo which are celebrated, and before taking up the journey westward drive your car around the city walls. This is the greatest treat in Lucca, as well as one of the prettiest boulevard sights in Italy —the Pinciano Hill not excepted.

The top, wide enough for ten automobiles to pass

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"to unmask and stand for his picture"

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abreast, is laid in an exquisite park effect beneath trees of forest size that have been growing on the wall for centuries. Here the grass is the greenest green, and the flowers the brightest bright. Here are the most entrancing smiles and quick flashes of white teeth, the merriest laughter, the most languorous beauty; for every afternoon the city comes to walk or drive, or to sit upon the ample benches. Even the nurse girls, in oddly pretty costumes, who keep the children from falling sixty feet into the moat below, are bunches of good humor.

This drive will give you a good idea of Lucca's fashion, which affords smart turnouts and is eminently *comme il faut.* And it also gives a splendid panorama of the city, its domes and four or five campaniles,—one of which has such a mass of trees growing on its top that I cannot help wondering how long it will be before they crack the old tower. If I am not mistaken in you, you will leave Lucca saying that it is one of the most attractive spots you were ever in.

The drive from here twists along more mountains. One of the most picturesque spots along the road, Ripafratta, holds a remnant of almost inconceivable private industry: the ruins of a castle that, with its walls, extended nearly a mile around the precipitous face of Monte Maggiore, being the place of which Dante wrote:

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"Unto the mountain, which forbids the sight
Of Lucca to the Pisan."

Another watering place is passed, Bangni-di-San Guiliano, where the ancients came for gout, and from here you glide down the Mediterranean slope where, eight kilometers to the west, can be seen the domes and leaning tower of Pisa. A long avenue of sycamores leads you to the moldy, castellated wall, and there I shall leave you for awhile, because it is late.

In ten minutes I am going to take another journey far across the Albano; far beyond earthly ranges of soil and stones, to a castle where my knee will bend before the reigning princess of a realm in misty paradise. Put forth your hand and raise me up, and let me sit beside you through the night. For there no crutches are, and before the waking day I shall swiftly turn to Pisa, a happier, truer, better man. Good-night.

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"drive your car around the city walls"

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XIV

PISA AND TO SIENA

OUTSIDE of that large quadrangular space occupied by the cathedral, baptistery and leaning campanile, and flanked by the most interesting Campo Santo in Italy, excepting, perhaps, the one at Genoa, there is little in Pisa to hold one. This is not because the city has no beautiful or interesting relics, but because they are overshadowed by the aforesaid big show which fixes itself in the tourist's mind to the exclusion of all else.

In this respect Pisa is like a family of girls in which one is a raving beauty. The others may be awfully nice, and fine, and even pretty, but they can never escape the dazzling brilliancy of the particular star. And so the other churches here would be all right to visit, were they detached. Yet I cannot let you leave without seeing that attractive little chapel, Santa Maria della Spina, so called because the genuine crown of thorns is kept there.

It is built in French-Gothic style and was therefore more refreshing to me because I was becoming rather satiated with heavier types. Originally intended for sailors about to go to sea, it has some cu-

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rious—some pathetically curious—marine offerings, probably laid on the altars by praying mothers and sweethearts.

The town still shows evidences of past grandeur, some interesting mediæval buildings, and an occasional glimpse of some relic of Roman days. The museum would be interesting were it the only one in the world.

In mild weather it is nice to take a boat and follow the Arno, that flows through the city's midst, for in this way one gets a better conception of her growth. But you will not stay long away from the Piazza del Duomo.

Do not forget when entering this most beautiful of Baptisteries to cast your eye around for a little guard about five feet high, with a long nose and a gray mustache; then slip him a franc, point aloft and whisper: "Sing!" He will clear his throat, tilt back his head and emit a note so like an organ pipe that one looks, almost startled, to find its origin. This echoes and re-echoes up through the dome, finally dying off into a long, trembling echo of the echo, leaving one uncertain when or where it really stops. Then he will take that note again, and send after it other notes, dropping in minor thirds until the dome is filled with a rich, full chord reverberating for quite half a minute after his own voice is quiet. All sorts of harmonies he produces, making them seem like a sustained or-

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"in the tourist's mind to the exclusion of all else"

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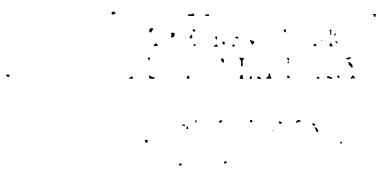

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gan chord. Provide yourself with a few silver pieces and listen to the weirdest, most unique concert in the world. If he had not been called away I think I should have gone bankrupt right there in the Baptistery at Pisa.

This building thoroughly satisfies one, and nothing can describe the grace of many things it contains. Still, the same praise may be added to the cathedral. But these are places commonly known, and you will shortly see for yourself. Perhaps you will wonder as I did: Wherein lies the charm of this marvelous group of buildings? Is it the architectural perfection of the cathedral, the unceasing wonder of the leaning tower, the great beauty of the Baptistery or the quiet peace of the Campo Santo? I asked myself these questions again and again, and finally decided that it was not any one, but all. Just as in the Baptistery the final re-echoed notes were more beautiful than the first, so the wonder of each building is reflected from the others. Placed as they are, surrounded by the greenest of green carpets and under the rarest blue of an Italian sky, I bowed my head in reverence to the artist who could have produced such perfection, and in thankfulness to the wisdom that has kept them intact from the encroachment of modernism.

An interesting bit of news extracted from the Tower guard shows that fourteen people have

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jumped from its top in the last twenty years—and I should have expected more, considering the penchant which melancholic persons have toward romantic or theatrical spots for this sort of crime. Indeed, some of these may have fallen by accident since this monster campanile is almost devoid of railings, and Brentheim says that one's sensation when on the lower side is terrifying.

Most of the unfortunates were men; in fact, there were eleven men and three women, with their nationality divided between Italy and France—the former being in majority. The Count did not want to leave me below but I made him go up, declaring that a second handed report was better than no report at all; and after he had been away quite long enough to bore me, I began amusing myself with the gate guard.

"Were any of those people killed?" I asked.

"Who, Signor?" he politely turned.

"Those who jumped off the top," I said, keeping a straight face.

"Oh, Signor, how could it have been otherwise!" he exclaimed, looking at me in astonishment.

"I am sorry," I murmured, sadly shaking my head, "for I suspect that my friend is going to jump."

In a trice the guard was darting up the steps, and I went my way into the cool cathedral. Brentheim joined me within a few minutes—out of breath, hot, and terribly angry, but never once suspecting me.

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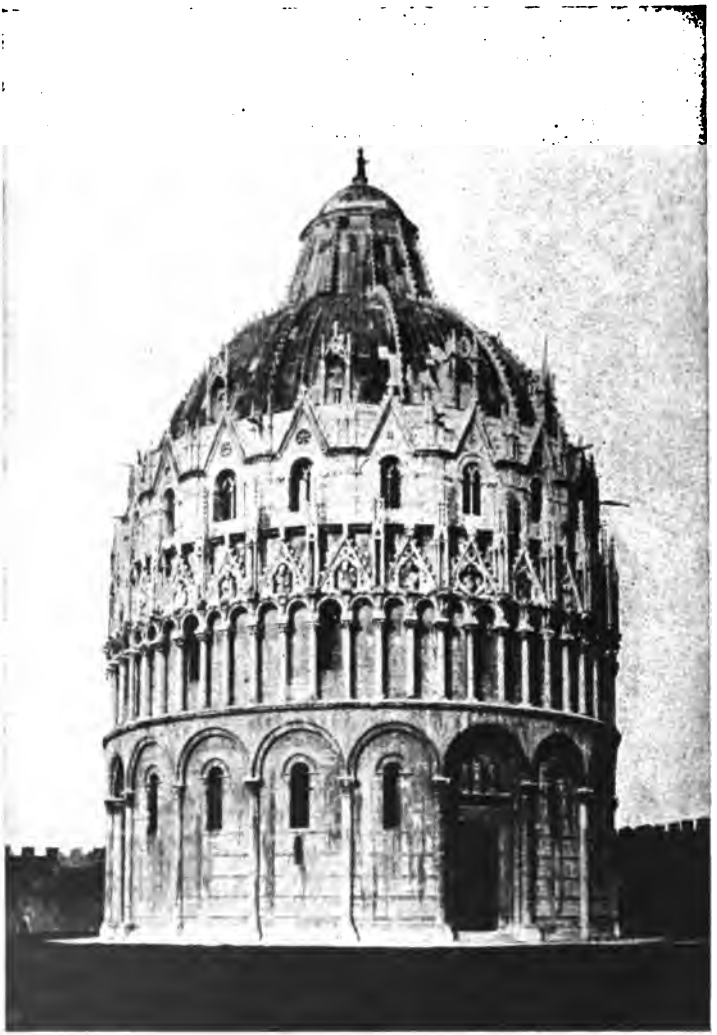

"when entering this most beautiful of baptisteries"

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When he cools off, I may tell him how it happened.

Two illusions are dispelled by our coming to Pisa. In the first place I once read somewhere that the tower was built to lean. This is not so. And again, when my Aunt Perlina, 350 pounds of beloved flesh, visited here in the early 80's, family tradition held that it was her weight which made it sink. As a child, having overheard this household pleasantry, I used to get out my sister's geography on rainy days, turn to the picture of the Leaning Tower, and contemplate the prowess of my aunt.

There were two woodcuts of unusual charm in that book; this one, and the Colossus of Rhodes, and I used to picture the Colossus as Aunt Perlina, or vice versa, imagining her stepping up on the tower until it was properly bent, and then down again. Now, I am unhappy, for I see that she could not possibly have done so—and anyway, the old thing leaned centuries before my Aunt Perlina was born. I'm almost sorry we came to Pisa.

The huge lamp of bronze suspended by a slender stem from the cathedral's high ceiling to within twelve feet of the floor, known as Galileo's lamp, is in one respect more inspiring than the campanile, baptistery, Campo Santo, or all of Pisa combined, because it seems more of a human, living link between to-day and the misty past. When one stands at a certain place in the nave, this lamp hangs directly

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between him and a large choir window, and here stood one day young Galileo while a student at the University of Pisa; perhaps not conscious that his mind was on the verge of grasping one of the greatest of his principles. Here he stood, a man somewhat ridiculed, partially tolerated, wholly disbelieved, perhaps listening to the same chant being echoed through the stilly church—the same chant we heard to-day. And as his eyes rested on the lamp, remaining fixed upon it, and scarcely seeing—a way which preoccupied thinkers sometimes have—it gradually dawned upon him that the thing was moving. Perhaps he rubbed his eyes, supposing that sleep, or overwork, was playing them a prank; but a more intent look proved that the great carved mass of bronze, having been completed by Lorenzi but five years before, actually swayed.

Watching it for an hour, he finally left the church with a well formulated idea of the isochronism of the pendulum, and all to which this subsequently led was a matter of quick development. I stood on the same spot and watched the same sway of the same lamp that has kept up this perpetual motion for over four hundred years. No wonder it seems to be a living, breathing, pulsing thing; looking down upon all men who stop to see its motion, and perhaps mutely holding forth other secrets of far greater value, were there only a Galileo now to understand!

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"more attractive because a fair was in progress'

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It was with some reluctance that we headed toward Siena, leaving behind these fairy places of marble, but the morning was advancing and ninety kilometers of unknown road lay ahead. The first twenty kilometers, through Cascina and Pontedera is without choice of ways, but here at the junction of the Era and Arno, take the southern route; that is, the one leading through Rotta, San Romano, and Pinocchio, which is the turning off point for San Miniato—and you must not miss San Miniato.

From Rotta you enter a rougher country, more mountainous, more crowned with ruined castles; but the valleys are fertile, and the people, while still barefooted, are sparkling examples of happiness. Many sheep graze along this way, their shepherdesses lying in the shade of spreading trees knitting, and the two-wheel market carts drawn by larger and more gentle oxen than farther north, add a pleasing touch to the picture.

Castlefranco may be seen across the Arno, with behind it one of the old towers of Etruscan days. Right here, where the road turns off to Palaga, rounding a curve we almost dashed into a small tributary of the Arno, which had risen above its banks and swept away the brick arch bridge of Roman days. Its strength should have withstood any amount of raving from a stream so small, but some of these mountain-fed brooks grow to giants with the slight-

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est provocation. A sad loss to have this landmark destroyed by the fury of a creek, but a sadder one had we tumbled over the brink. Italy is too cautious of road accidents to leave this long unguarded, so I have no doubt that by the time you come, warning signs, or perhaps a new bridge, will be in place.

Turn south at Pinocchio for San Miniato—a steep climb to a wonderfully quaint walled-in town. This hill-crest stronghold, one time an imperial palace of Frederick Barbarossa, the "Red Beard," seemed more particularly attractive because of a fair in progress; and the people from the surrounding valley, flooding its streets, were decked in costumes which made them as interesting to us as we were curious to them. It was nothing unusual, several times stopping stock still in this sea of human forms, to have a few genial spirits climb upon our running board and look in with good-natured grins and pleasant words; and we felt as though every one in San Miniato were a personal and deeply devoted friend.

The ruined Barbarossa Castle, now but a fragment of walls, that crests a hill above the town, and its sky cleaving tower that has stood for several centuries, were this day the strolling place of maids and swains who came picnicking to the fair; and a more romantic spot wherein to make love cannot exist in Tuscany. The view from here takes in seventeen villages dotting the plains as far north as Albano. The

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"as we were curious to them"

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Arno, carrying its news of Florence to the Mediterranean, winds through this valley as though not caring whether it got anywhere or not; and the sapphire sky, seeming within reaching distance of one's hand —oh, well! Why go on, when you saw it with me, standing there shoulder to shoulder and hand in hand! Forgive me, Polly, but you know I cannot always help it.

Down in the square, in the mart of side shows and fakirs, a pair of traveling minstrels held the crowd enthralled. There, a middle-aged man who drew excruciating wails from an old accordion, and a half naked boy in gaudy trunks who cleverly twisted in and out of an iron hoop, were a picturesque pair— especially the lad, whose long black curls soon matted about his face with honest perspiration, and whose faun eyes never left those of a peasant girl standing slightly tense and forward. A good short story ran riot in those glances; a story which was probably written out that night in the moon shadows of the Barbarossa tower, when San Miniato lay sleeping off the effects of its nervous exhilaration.

This municipal hilarity was still in full force when we wound down the hill, taking the right hand road to Ponte a Elsa, there turning south to Castlefiorantino and following the river through to Siena.

Many quaint customs are in evidence along this picturesque way. At Certaldo, for instance, from

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almost every house we saw a girl emerge, carrying a candle and walking with carefully measured steps. The reason for this was not discovered until a few squares farther on, when a cheap looking hearse stood backed to a door, surrounded by women with sad eyes. For the moment our appearance diverted their attention, but it was only for a moment.

This is also the home of Giovanni Boccaccio, who, while born in Paris, died in the family castle close by and is buried in Santi Michelo e Jocopo church. His monument stands in the public square, and many relics of his life are kept here—among other things a garter, of which I'd give a whole lot to know the story.

Continuing up the valley, and shadowed by rugged mountains, you slip into Poggibonsi before quite realizing it is there. And here comes another choice of roads, but I advise the one leading through Colle di Val d'Elsa, for along it are the most interesting palaces. Palazzo Ceccerelli, the home of Arnolfo di Cambio, first architect of the cathedral at Florence, for instance, is one.

Yet before getting this far, and practically all the way down from Certaldo, keep an eye to the right for those famous old towers of Tuscany; relics of the Etruscan days, which dot the hilltops in silent testimony of a past grandeur. It is said around here that the Etruscans were once called Turreni because

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"with its sky-line cleaving tower"

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they dwelt in towers, but I cannot vouch for this. At any rate, these towers in Tuscany, more numerous than anywhere else in Italy, and especially so in this particular district around San Gimignano and Volterra, were reduced by law during the twelfth century to a height of only fifty *braccia,* being, as decay set in, a menace to life and property. The inclination to live high was general in the early times, and those curious leaning towers in Bologna are but two of many built by influential families as places of refuge at the approach of a superior force.

While still in view of these sentinel relics, the drive through Staggia and San Dalmazio into Siena is most restful. It is autumn, and the soft, dreamy atmosphere, which calls a scattering human kind back to closer companionship, is on the hills. The crops are in, and along the roadside are met peasants with complacent faces—some smooth, some seared—carrying home fagots to fight the winter that has given its warning here or there by a yellowing leaf. Sometimes a stray butterfly gyrates across the path, never dreaming that he, too, should be harvesting a store of protection against the long days to come. We would profit by many good lessons from the peasants and the butterflies, dear Polly, were not the joy of flying across a road much sweeter than tramping under a chafing load of fagots.

In the reflection of the glass front I have caught

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Brentheim looking at me several times with an expression of approval; not as a curious friend, but as an observing physician. I shall not hope—no, I shall not even think, that some miracle may bring me a fireside of my own, with fagots to gather from life's highways to warm the hearth where someone shall sit with me forever side by side! I shall not hope, I shall not think, I shall not write of the blessed happiness this would be; but neither will I believe that one who wants a thing so much, and who needs it so much, and who lives in the faith of its ultimate coming, shall be for always denied. Good-night.

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XV

SIENA

WHEN I awoke to-day in this most celebrated town of lower Tuscany, and leaned in the open window to say my devotions to you, sweet Polly, there, rising from an ocean of moss covered tile roofs, as choppy as any small sea that ever tossed a wave, stood the grand Duomo with its campanile. Like a wrinkled old man leaning on his staff, it stared at me in curious wonder, considering what manner of Man this was who gazed into the eastern sky—into that *primo chiaroro dell'alba,* which, since God said "let there be light," has drawn from the worst of us thoughts made chaste by sleep—whispering things to a far-away saint who was not a dweller in its musty niches.

This sublime cathedral is said to be the most purely Gothic of all Italian churches, and, with the one at Orvieto, stands as a testimonial to what the unassisted genius of a people could produce in that era of mediæval Christianity.

There is an impressive splendor about it quite irresistible. Generously bedecked with ornaments of rather more bizarre than delicate beauty; furnished

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with mosaics, frescoes and exquisite carvings, domed in Etruscan and Roman taste, rather than the Gothic of its other parts; floored with a kind of tersia work, life-sized in many instances and exceptionally true in drawing, it satisfies one's sense of variety without producing a jar. Perhaps the nearest to a jar comes from the building scheme itself, that has helped to make it famous: horizontal layers of white and black marble about a foot thick, from ground to roof, giving it a sort of zebra effect. It stands to-day but a small part of the original plan—in fact the entire church now comprising only the right and left transepts of a monster cathedral with which Siena once hoped to surprise the world, had they not been permanently checked by a death dealing plague. But the front, and one other of these first planned walls, had already been built, and these still stand, detached and so monumental that, looking from the present church across the open square to this abandoned entrance, the idea of distance is so great that one cannot comprehend how it could have been covered by a single roof.

Everyone to his own taste when it comes to the interior. There are really so many things from which to choose that I suppose no two persons could agree upon a selection of any three best. My own preferences are first the line of Pope's heads, each from a separate niche, extending just under the arches. These, more than life-size, are carved largely from

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imagination; and this fact is the pleasing feature, showing as it does the versatility of the sculptors. Just try yourself drawing almost two hundred heads, giving to each a distinct individuality wherein must be expressions of grace and nobility, and see how far you get!

The carved marble pavement is next, covered with Graffito representations for the most part taken from Old Testament tales. I am about as much of a duffer in art of this kind as any other, but it pleased me quite a good deal. A protecting wood floor has been laid over the entire nave, and we were told with no little pride—and no little suggestiveness—that an American gentleman (meaning one who has collected many treasures out of Europe) had paid a thousand francs to have this lifted so he could view the hidden beauty. Brentheim and I were content with studying the less sumptuous aisles which were thought unnecessary to be covered, and an octagonal space beneath the dome that is roped off with heavy silken cords.

You will smile at my third choice, when there are so many grander things around, but humor me by dropping in to see it: a beautiful mosaic representing the Flight into Egypt, in one of the little chapels off the right, and so cleverly done by Frey that you will have to step close before being convinced it is not a canvas.

It is pleasant, too, to see portraits of the old mas-

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ters which Pinturicchio has occasionally put in his series of large frescoes representing the history of Pius II. For in these one sees Raphael, a graceful lad, with every line poetic; Fra Bartolomeo della Porta is there, grave and thoughtful; Andrea del Sarto in whose face is shown the perfect lover of that beautiful young wife he immortalized in almost all of his work. Such devotion to her would have placed him among the greatest of artists, even though his hand had never known a brush.

Existing between this church and the one at Rimini is a striking similarity, yet in no way architectural. Each has been practically converted into a family memorial temple, and while this one may be more condoned than in the Malatesta case, it seems, nevertheless, a bit curious.

The Piccolomini were mighty in this province and perhaps the most powerful people of their time, rising to their triumph in the production of Eneas Silvius, undoubtedly the greatest male personage Siena has given to the world.

I shall not lift the veil from his early life. There is no use scandalizing society with lurid details of a young rake, who, even in the teeth of a death-driving plague that took his nineteen brothers and sisters, was never once deterred from excesses which would have brought a blush to the fifteenth century swashbuckler. Let us pass over that and come to one day

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when Monsieur Capranica, Bishop of Fermo, stopped in Siena while on his way to the council at Bale to vindicate himself of some slanderous charges.

Eneas Silvius, happening to meet him and seeing an adventure ahead, persuaded the bishop to take him along as secretary; for the young man was handsome and brilliant to a degree, possessing an exceptional magnetism which may have been partially responsible for much of his checkered life. They arrived at Bale after a series of dangers, wherein Eneas wounded some of the best blades along their way, and so charmed the good man that he talked of the coming investigation with confidential frankness; winning the secretary firmly to his cause, and making him familiar with every point of the case.

The result was that at Bale, Eneas defended his master with such eloquence and such convincing logic that the council apologized for ever having attempted to probe his reverence at all. From this time forward the young man's career became more daring and more brilliant, but now working toward good. The influence of the noble monsignor changed him into another being, which resulted twenty-seven years later in his being crowned at St. Peter's, Pope Pius II.

To-day the cathedral is generously bedecked with the Piccolomini arms, five crescents on a shield, and

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its library floor is paved with blue tiles, each containing a crescent.

The story of how the Piccolomini family lost a crescent from their shield comes from Brentheim, who stayed out late to-night digging up some new facts. From time immemorial this great family's armorial bearings contained six crescents, and no power was ever great enough to whip them the least little bit; but one year came a bloody war with the Saracens, who, resorting to all sorts of trickery, succeeded in carrying away the most precious relic of the Piccolomini domain: an arm of St. John the Baptist. There was an awful fuss when it became known, for in this mummified member was thought to be invested the Piccolomini power.

In vain did they try to win it back, and when finally force had proved inadequate, the older men resorted to diplomacy. A certain Saracen prince had seen and fallen in love with one of the Piccolomini daughters, Aria by name, who dwelt in a far-off castle and, though from a more obscure branch, was the most beautiful girl in Tuscany. Here was the means, and the elders used it, finally completing an agreement by which St. John's arm was to be placed at a certain spot, and, coincidentally, the fair Aria would be there for exchange. Then a deputation from each side would approach, and each return with its coveted treasure.

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"the sweet Aria laughed from the highest tower of her castle"

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But Aria had no idea of becoming a Saracen wife; and, besides, her feelings were hurt. Being in possession of two arms, each of which was far more lovely than the withered relic, and also perhaps not forgetting that she had other members as well, this Tuscan maid flew into a tempest. She loved her unfettered life, her horses and falcons—if they had such things as falcons in those days—too much to submit; so, when visited by the arrangement committee, she threw one elder from her tower, and another she scratched; the third got away. Thereupon the whole country arose and demanded the sacrifice, convincing her at last that resistance was useless.

It happened now that in the castle was a domestic resembling her in form, and not by any means opposed to accepting the exalted place of Saracen princess. The plan worked nicely. The enemy's deputation marched off with a veiled scullery maid and the Piccolomini, amidst great rejoicing, came back with the relic; but the next morning—oh!

The Saracen prince was swearing, his army yelling, and the Piccolomini were trying to apologize, all at the same time; while the sweet Aria laughed from the highest tower of her castle. Nor could she be dislodged. Her father entreated, her brothers threatened, but she called down to them that a live body was more important to her way of thinking than a

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dead arm, and if they tried to force an entrance she would kill herself.

Then the prince made a stinging demand: that the Piccolomini, to prove their innocence and vindicate their honor, should give a crescent from their armorial bearings. This finally came about, and now in the cathedral, in a silver casket emblazoned with a shield that shows but five crescents, reposes the arm of St. John, and also a banner of the Saracens on which is worked the one crescent they extracted from this noble family. But this transpired long before the time of Eneas Silvius.

Coming again to his own period one is struck by the coincidence that the two perhaps greatest personages in Sienese history should have lived at the same period—although born in entirely different spheres of life. I speak of Catherine Benincasa, the Sienese patron saint, and the same Eneas.

Down in a humble quarter of the town, humble in spirit as also in position, one Jacopo Benincasa lived, following the trade of dyer and struggling to keep well filled a horde of mouths; for he and Lapa, his wife, happened to be the parents of twenty-five children. It is true that the plague removed most of these responsibilities from Jacopo, but it left Catherine to him—she, the least beloved of his many. In the midst of these troublous times she was given scanty thought, but at the age of thirteen, after much

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"down in a humble quarter of town"

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pleading, fasting, and parental punishment, she gained permission to enter the Dominican order. Here for three years she never left her cell except to attend church, and maintained an almost unbroken silence.

At the end of this time, now but sixteen, she re-entered the world to nurse the plague stricken sick whose families had fled from them in terror; comforting the bereaved, being the embodiment of selflessness and purity. Not beautiful, but with a face and form of æsthetic charm, pale and weakened by self-imposed fasts, the people began to worship the very ground on which she trod.

I will not take you through the conflicts of her life that ended at the age of thirty-two, but want to mention one incident as an example of what she was —as indeed, it shows to what white heights all women attain when they are wonderful like Catherine, and you. There was locked in the Siena prison a nobleman doomed to die for treason. His had been a gay life; his was a vigorous nature, too fun-loving and young to be reconciled with this sudden exit. Therefore, did he rail against fate, curse the church and make himself a nuisance generally.

This reached Catherine's ears and she hurried to his cell, where, being admitted, they were alone some hours. Each morning she came; not because she had a personal liking for the man, but her nature revolted

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to see any one not raised to the highest pinnacle of rapture at the imminent prospect of meeting his God.

It was a changed person finally led out to the scaffold in that picturesque square before the city hall. He came with brave steps, brave because she was waiting there to meet him. With comforting words she greeted him, with a smile she knelt before the block, putting her own head in the groove to show how simply it was done; with gentle fingers running through his curls she placed him in exact position to receive the axman's surest stroke, and with soothing whispers stamped a smile upon his lips that lingered after the dismembered head was held alone between her hands. Then she fainted.

A few years after her death, Pius II—her own townsman who had started life in a palace, lived a licentious youth and now sat upon the papal throne—was asked to inscribe the humble girl's name upon the roll of Virgins; and so he did, delivering a touching tribute both to her and to the city which had borne them. Her head was embalmed, and is preserved in the cathedral, being shown every Sixth of May, which is the feast day of this patron saint.

The Piazza del Campo, at the juncture of three hills, where the execution took place, and where the jousting, bull-fighting and horse-racing of olden times were held, is a thing apart from public squares of other cities. Standing, for instance, at the Town

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"Piazzo del Campo, where the execution took place"

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Hall and under that tower considered by many to possess more grace than any in Italy, one looks out upon a sort of amphitheater about four hundred yards long and three hundred deep, gradually rising without interruption of steps. Encircling this is a wide, level promenade, and beyond are the old palaces—in some instances still connected by their famous little bridges. For when the Sienese council, in order to discourage extravagance in dress, once passed a law forbidding women to come upon the street except in certain humble costumes, the ladies instantly retaliated by dressing in the most exquisite gowns that fashion could devise and then parading back and forth on these connecting bridges, thus breaking the spirit, but not the actual letter of the law.

Once every year now it throws upon its shoulders the cloak of a picturesque past, and this is in mid-August when each of the seventeen city wards sends its horse and jockey to strive for the Paloi banner; a race run around the square, which for days has been swarmed by wagons and carts depositing earth upon the rough stones. The horses are first taken to the priests of their locality and properly blessed, and the banner is afterwards usually hung in the church whose horse has been run to victory. These animals are not thoroughbreds, nor are they ridden by professional jockeys. You would never suspect it were you to see them.

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The Sienese were always a nobly inclined people; loving pleasure, adoring pomp and finally allowing their firm Ghibelline sympathies to carry them down before the furious Florentines. But their nobility of mind seems to have existed only in the days of affluence, for they were poor losers; one celebrated instance of small mindedness being in a fit of superstitious malice, wherein they destroyed that rare antique Venus and buried it in Florentine soil.

But among them to-day we saw only gay humor and gentle manners—with one exception which I have almost forgotten. At the huge fountain in the Piazza del Campo came a small boy to fill a water jug. A larger boy, happening by, gave him a wicked push, whereupon the vessel lay in fragments on the ground, and although the youngster set up a mighty wail—doubtless seeing visions of what was coming to him at home—his tormentor only jeered and skipped away.

Brentheim, always stung into action by injustices of any kind, chased this fellow and, dragging him back, held his head under the spout for a good sousing; so the bystanders laughed and a pair of gendarmes laughed, but now the big boy burst into a wail equaling almost that of his small victim. Thereupon Brentheim gave the little fellow a coin with which to buy another water jug, and also a coin to the big boy on his promise of better manners in the

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"said to possess more grace than any tower in Italy"

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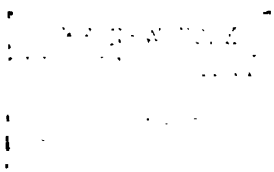

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future; so they were soon both laughing, which, with the people still laughing, and the gendarmes still laughing, resulted in everybody being happier than before.

How curious are the ramifications of that mystic force called happiness, before it finally reaches us all! Is there a mistake—a slipping of some wheel in the great machinery of things—when one poor devil is denied his portion altogether?

And yet I cannot leave you in a mood like this, and will confess an honest admission that many times the fault lies in my own misconception of what really makes for the ultimate good.

Ever since one dark night, when my pony balked on a Montana pass, and I spurred and beat and cursed because he would not budge, I have been more generous toward this view. For when daylight came I saw him firm, but trembling, on the brink of a fearful gorge. I wanted then to wash his bleeding flanks and kiss his nose, but was too ashamed to let him see that the rowels had pierced my own conscience deeper than his poor skin. Ah, well, he might not have understood—though I should have been better for confessing! Good-night.

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XVI

SIENA AND TO PERUGIA

PERHAPS no part of your trip will be scenically as pleasing as this stretch between Siena and Perugia, but you must leave the main highway for most of the journey, as we did. Go by the eastern gate from Siena and start off on the road to Arezzo; immediately, however, after crossing the railroad tracks the third time—which will occur in about eight kilometers from the city—the road forks.

Look out for this fork. A high, triangular stone post carries the signs, and take the right-hand way marked "Via Chiana," then thank me; for almost immediately you will come out upon a country that has no parallel in Italy. At first you will wonder whether or not you are seeing things aright, and after that you will just wonder! It is a deeply furrowed formation, something of a mixture between the Dakota bad lands, the dunes of Scotland—though stripped of heather—and the lava beds of Vesuvius.

In reality it is known as the sterile chalk-clay country, an arid stretch on which some few lean peasants try to raise a scattered crop. Centuries of rains have washed down the richer soil, leaving the clay deposits

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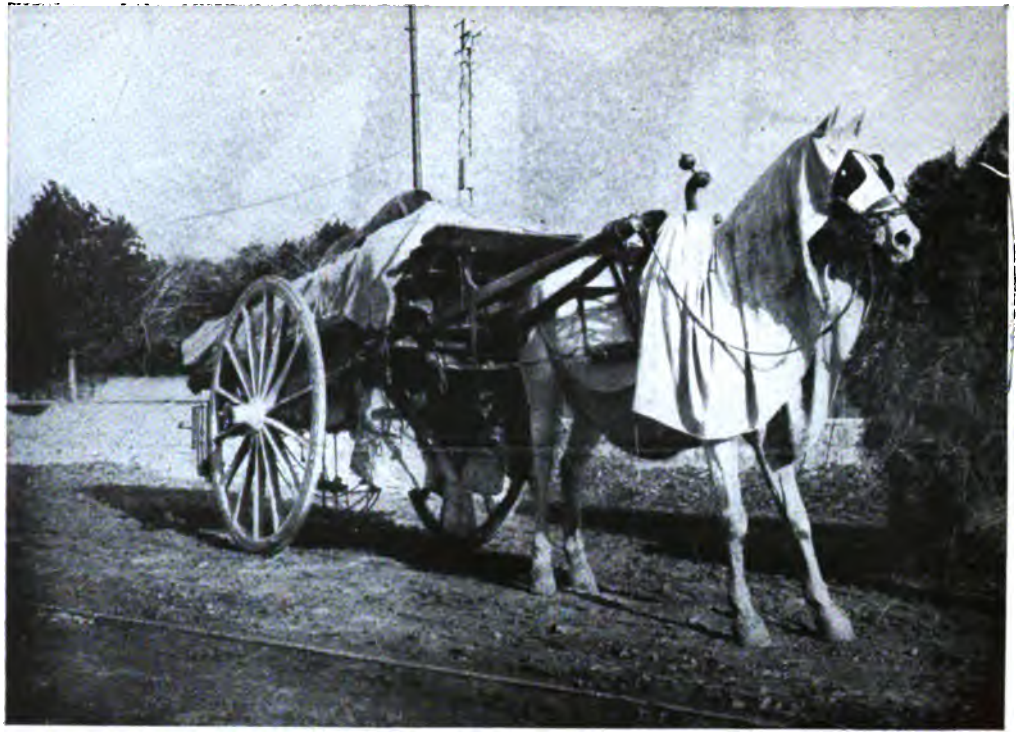

"will be terribly upset by the mysteries of your motor"

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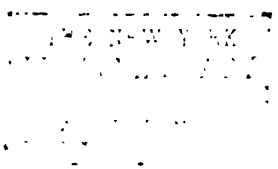

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in all sorts of fantastic shapes; pyramids, serpentine ridges, stars, crescents—all measuring from one hundred to one thousand meters in diameter; except a multitude of pygmy bumps, or pom-pons, to the height of twenty feet or so, resembling mushrooms.

This area extends for about thirty-five kilometers, and everywhere is seen the result of patient labor—a patience spurred by necessity—for the peasants search out among these freaks the tiny bits of good ground still remaining, and there plant crops. Sometimes one man will have as many as forty fields under cultivation, and each field not larger than a drawing-room.

Moreover, the road, an excellent one, follows the backbone of these ridges, twisting in all directions and affording an experience in crest travel such as I've never before seen. For fifteen kilometers out upon this weird district, the campaniles of Siena remain distinctly visible, and in some places for five or six kilometers, ahead and behind, one can trace the road, lying far below like a crumpled piece of silver wire. There are no signposts in this waste, but neither is there a chance of going wrong.

About five kilometers after taking the right-hand fork, a little road shoots off to Leonina to the left. Do not take it. As a landmark I may mention that in another five kilometers you will pass through Vescona, but keep a sharp lookout, or you'll not see

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it. Again in five kilometers a road turns right to Rofeno, but you must continue straight on, bearing slightly left, and in still another five kilometers will reach Asciano.

Only seldom will you pass a house, and any horse you meet will be terribly upset by the mysteries of your motor. Few people live in the chalk-clay country, because few can make a living there, and you are constantly reminded of traveling through a land that has just been swept by plague or war. The little pom-pons of earth look like funeral mounds; the scarcity of people seems like death. I have seen lives that resemble this place.

No springs are here, and the peasants are grateful to catch a little water in clay pools dug in the ground —and I have seen lives like this also. It is a stretch that must be swept by merciless winter winds, because the few stables we saw were burrowed in the hillsides. Scattered flocks of sheep look appealingly at the few lean men who attend them, and the women's eyes are dark and hollow.

Asciano with its old walls, towers, gates and 3,500 inhabitants, is not a wonderful place, but seems to bring one back from his thought vagaries again to Italy. The Ombrone River flowing at its feet a hundred yards below—unfortunately too far down to flood and wash the streets, but making a pretty picture, for all that—and several old churches which con-

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"between groves and groves of olive trees"

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tain a few things worth seeing if you are not in a hurry, comprise its attractions.

But do not leave this place without making a short detour up to Mount Oliveto Maggiore, that famous Benedictine Convent—now, of course, suppressed. Take the highway—I would advise against the shorter route with a baggage loaded touring car, because it is too steep. The monks have by untiring and intelligent efforts converted the sterile clay soil into a veritable garden spot, though greater interest lies within the massive gray walls where some choice paintings are treasured. That brilliant scion of the Piccolomini family, Eneas Silvius, thought the beauty of this spot quite without equal.

When you reach the tower, look far to the south where the Arbia meets the Ombrone, and see the little town, Buonconvento, where the disappointed dreamer, Henry VII, died. Starting again from Asciano you must follow a communale road, or, as we would say, a county road, because there is no other way through Trequenda to Sinalunga—but neither is a better one to be found in Italy.

From here on the transformation is striking. Everywhere east of Asciano the country is smiling and thickly planted, just as the peasants also are smiling and living closer together; for the sterile country has suddenly surrendered to a soil giving generously of its rich substance to those who dig. I

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only mention Trequenda for a passing landmark—as indeed, I may call attention to solemn Scorfiano, cutting the sky line with its solitary campanile far to the left—because there is no reason to stop; in fact, you will not want to stop, but just roll on through one of the prettiest countries in the world, over a splendid road between groves and groves and groves of olive trees.

Did you ever know that an olive tree, after getting to be a hundred or so years old, splits up into smaller trees, then spreads out at the roots in order that these wounded sections may get the sun and thrive? Curious sort of process, but they do it right along, and we were shown several groups of five or six large bearing trees which in this way came from one seedling planted a few centuries ago.

Of course Brentheim got busy with his camera, and I noticed that he pointed it oftener at specimens of this kind where the prettiest peasant girls were picking the latest crop. Girls work here as hard as men. We passed several putting rock upon the road, or digging irrigation ditches, and some were not more than twelve years old.

Sinalunga is interesting, not alone because of its picturesque walls and towering castle, but as the place where Garibaldi was captured during his war of 1867. He had left the Palazzo to inspect his troops and see that everything was in readiness for his march upon

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"all along here are armies of dark skinned girls picking olives"

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Rome next day, when—but you know the story! You could not have been in Italy this long without hearing it from a dozen tongues.

From this point, just before dipping into one of the most peaceful of valleys, you will see your prospective road to Foiana, leading straight away like a white thread until lost in the opposite hills. This valley of the Chiano was once a lowland of deadly fever, caused by deposits from the Arno that in very ancient times passed through here to meet the Tiber, subsequently becoming so sluggish that its verdant banks were converted into places of stagnant muck. Dante called it a "fever haunted swamp," but changing ages, and latter day engineering feats, have reclaimed it into one of Italy's most fertile plains.

On a low, adjoining crest, is a curious ruin, the remnants of the castle Baglioni, where it is said once dwelt the meanest, wickedest man who ever lived—not excepting Judas. Like Baron di Retz, of France, he was given the reputation of living on the blood of children whom he stole at night. Tradition has it that one of his victims was ill with small-pox, and in this way the vampire met retribution.

Unless you love della Robbia more than I do, you will not stop at the adjacent town, for, excepting a few works of this kind and the last canvas painted by Luca Signorelli, there is nothing; so it may be wiser to keep on toward Cartona where, after a stiff climb,

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you can get an omelette spraddled out like a pancake, a pewter pot filled with denatured coffee, some gray bread, and swear it is all ambrosia; just because you are up in the clouds and, from a 2,100 foot altitude, looking miles back across the valley, and miles to the southward where the beautiful Trasimeno lies.

Cartona, older than Rome, was taken by the Etruscans when it was an Umbrian town, which accounts for the multitude of Etruscan relics found thereabouts and placed in the local museum. It is also the birthplace of Luca Signorelli and Pietro Beretlini, and prides itself on owning a number of their paintings.

The streets run without any regard for symmetry, either in grades or otherwise. You will pity the beggars, and enjoy the museum—and while here please stop for my sake before that entrancing circular candelabrum. Look first at its Gorgon's head, then slowly raise your eyes to the combat of wild beasts, then up to the dolphins and still higher to those wonderful sirens and satyrs, intermingled with the Bacchus heads! If I could only give that lamp to you! It must be very old, as the character of the bronze would testify, but whether brought from Greek Asia Minor, as some are inclined to think, is more open to argument than probability.

The cathedral, San Domenico, and Baptistery, you will enjoy. In fact, you will leave Cartona with a

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"where, oh where, is the spirit of that ancient pride!"

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sigh that may not be entirely from the spraddled omelette and coffee.

But now you take the main road, dropping into the valley at once; and do not think that the prettiest part of your day has passed. In many respects it has just begun with this last lap to Perugia. The smaller places, Ossia, Riccio and Terontola may be passed without serious comment, except that from Terontola keep a sharp watch for a second glimpse of Lake Trasimeno, which is even prettier at this point than on the heights of Cartona.

Eventually, you will skirt the entire north and northeast shores of this. It will be in the afternoon, and the light will exactly suit. All along here are armies of dark-skinned girls, picking olives, laughing to one another across the aisles of trees, and happy, oh, so happy! They do not know, nor would they care to know, that the soil which yields in such abundance to their skill has been enriched by thousands of gallons of human blood. This must not frighten you away, for it is all soaked in by this time.

It was at Tuoro, the little town up on a hill to your left just after leaving Terontola, that Hannibal posted the center of his forces one early spring day, 217 B. C., to entrap the incautious Roman consul Flaminius, who, believing the Carthaginian to be hurrying toward Rome, followed with more haste than prudence. Hannibal, however, seeming with super-

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human accuracy to anticipate the moves of his opposing generals, expected Flaminius to do just this very thing. A cloud is said to have enveloped the town, and this you will understand when seeing how the skies hang low here on wet days. So, being securely screened, he waited until the enemy got directly between Tuoro and the lake, and descended like an avalanche.

Before noon fifteen thousand Romans had been hacked to pieces, and tradition says that streams of blood ran into the lake, discoloring it a mile from shore. Indeed, it is to perpetuate the memory of these blood streams that a little village farther back is named Sanguineto. To-day the water is a soft green, blending strangely well with the deep blue overhead. Not in a single blade of grass, or in the twitter of a bird, or in the friendly salutations of the peasants, can one find a trace of carnage. Nothing remains but peace. Oh, Polly, what a blessed thing is peace, when souls fever and fret in a conflict of bleeding hearts!

Passignano, close down to the shore, is built intimately near a moth-eaten castle; but farther on, at Magione, stands a more picturesque ruin; once a fortress of the Baglioni, yet having in recent years been acquired by the Knights of Malta. We stopped there and were invited in. Where, oh where, is the spirit of that ancient pride, that these stones do not

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"leading to its thick set gates"

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writhe and fall upon their noble-built foundation! For to-day this castle is a blacksmith shop, and its one-time grandeur has become fetid by the inauguration of two room flats for poverty stricken families!

Slowly the Count and I re-entered our car and rolled away; nor do I think that even the approach to Perugia, standing high and proud upon the mountain, aroused in us anything like the proper enthusiasm; for the climb to this famous city, leading to its thick-set gate, is one of the spectacular features of motoring in Tuscany, and indeed, its equal is not often encountered anywhere in Italy. Good-night.

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XVII

PERUGIA

YOUR letter was waiting for me here, dear Polly, and I gave Brentheim the pretty little message, adding on my own behalf that if he were the man I take him for, he would write more frequently himself. A shy fellow, the Count is, with all his breadth and courage; however, in your presence he only suffers the affliction common to us all. You say I am giving too much space to trivial matters about yourself, and not enough to the trip. Heavens, is that meant for sarcasm, little tyrant? But have it your own way, since that was the agreement by which I am allowed to write you at all; and it won't be such a difficult job, knowing you will soon follow over the same route.

We have spent the day in lazy drives about the city, stopping often to the infinite relief of our string-halt horse, and not even opening a guide-book. Our more studious observation will begin to-morrow, but first we wished to absorb in full that mystic pleasure of going it blind, and at the turn of almost every street, passing from a world of to-day back into the middle ages.

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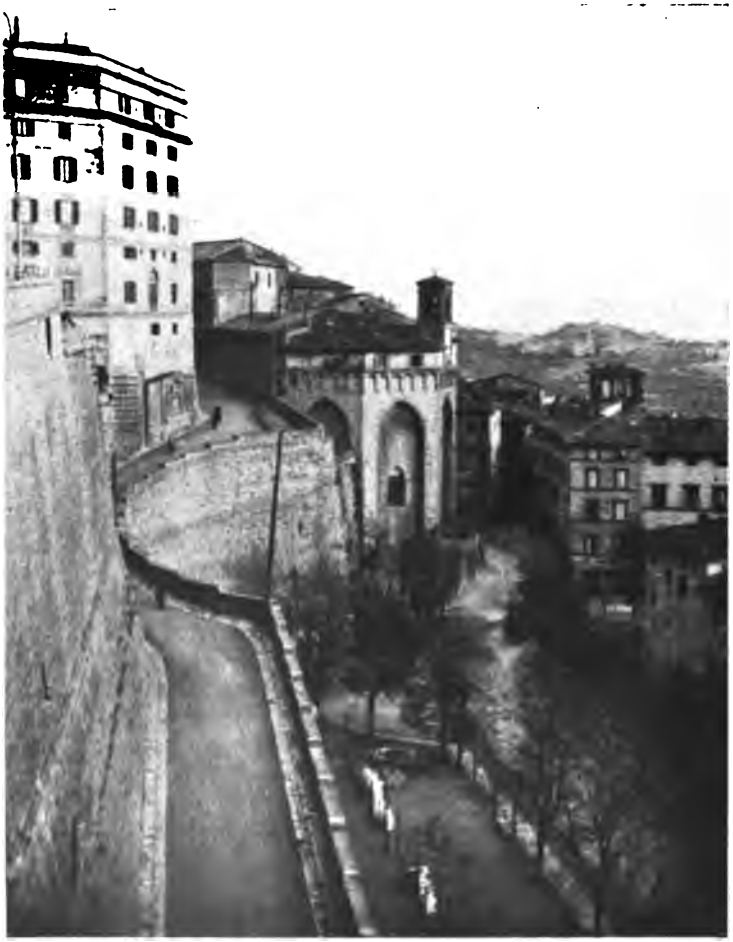

"passing from the world of today back into the middle ages"

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Perugia has well been called "the empress of the hill-set Italian cities." One sees the justice in this when standing anywhere along her angled walls, and feeling the sight pour from his eyes in a full glow of rapture. Down, down, and across the Umbrian valley, extending over a wide sweep of innumerable farms distinguishable by their vari-colored vegetation, is a picture of peace upon earth that has much lasting charm. The forbidding distant mountain peaks, baring their teeth to the sky, at first seem to have no place in this amicable landscape, until your binoculars show how gently their harsh sides temper down into slopes of friendly greeting and converge mildly out to meet the fields.

Small white spots dot this basin of the Umbria, and these are the homes of farmers. Fewer clusters of cypresses will be marked, pointing their dark green fingers toward God, but these are Death's granaries, where day by day, and year by year, the human harvest is stored by. Through the sensuous haze of a November Italian landscape, enriched by the mellow russet tints of passing leaves, distant cities may be seen perched upon their own crags: Assisi in the east, Todi far to the southward; and one knows that the tranquil lake Trasimeno lies toward the setting sun.

No place has been overlooked by the gentle goddess of Beauty, and no place shows an open wound of tragedy. True, the old fortress and the older

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walls suggest a time of hatred among men, but now in many of the gaping crevices and scars, soft curving vines have so artfully coaxed a living presence from the morbid past, that one forgets. One forgets that this spot, thrust straight up in the sky for all to see, was but a few brief centuries back a seething caldron of treacherous intrigue, a hot-bed of lustful soil to hypertrophize every human passion; that here dripped blood from window sills and, in the quiet midnights, naked human forms were cast into the streets; that priests splashed in gore across the floor of San Pietro, which had to be washed in wine and reconsecrated; that blasphemous cries of men, screams of resisting women and moans of children were more common than the songbirds of to-day.

Of all this, Perugia has ceased to think. The students play about the city, and once every month peasant men bring long horned, white cattle to show on a wide plain below the walls; jesting among themselves in good-natured rivalry, while their soft-eyed daughters lead gentle sheep which look on in mild wonder. But to some of the people the chance mention of a single name spreads their cheeks with pallor, and they step away, raising their hands with first and little fingers pointed out to keep off the evil eye. This name is Baglioni.

The scions of this fierce and warlike family—utterly indifferent to laws apart from those unto them-

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"when standing anywhere along her angled walls"

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selves, utterly unscrupulous, so utterly scornful of the church that they assassinated a nephew of Innocent VII, and made it necessary for a dignified cardinal to hide himself in a box of vegetables and be spirited from the city on a mule's back; whose remorseless vendetta among themselves, carried on with the ferocity of devils and the craft of snakes, would make a Kentucky feud look like a Quaker meeting; whose only equal in valor and only level in debauch throughout all Italy has not been written—first came upon the Perugian stage about the fifteenth century.

Somewhere down under the eastern walls of the city, in a dismal hut almost hewn from rocks, lives a man one hundred and thirty years old, who says his great-grandfather was a servant in the beautiful Atalanta's household. This spans a space of four hundred and eighty years, but he accounts therefor by saying that his father died at the age of one hundred and sixty, his grandfather at one hundred and ninety, and his great-grandfather was not known to have died at all. In spite of this delicious prevarication, it is a significant fact that the old fellow, being able neither to read or write, has a tale to tell which will hold history at almost every point. Why, then, should not his romance of Raphael be true?

For young Raphael was in Perugia during all this time, painting in the studio of Pietro Perugino. Indeed, the impressionable youth was an eyewitness to

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that splendid early morning combat between Astorre Baglioni, who, single handed upon his white charger, held the entire Oddi army at bay in the narrow street for almost an hour, until his sleeping fellows could be aroused. Wherefore is it said that Astorre has been immortalized in Raphael's mounted horseman trampling Heliodorus, which may be seen at the Vatican, and in the St. George, hanging in the Louvre.

This old man, whose name is Bordioni, has been undiscovered by tourists, and indeed we should have passed in ignorance of his remarkable existence had not a friend of Brentheim's, whose villa stands on the eastern slope, taken us there. It was a tortuous trip, for me at least, and I have since wondered how his old bones succeed in negotiating that dizzy path. But this is what he told, beginning it in the quaint way: "For you must know, young gentlemen—"

On that September morning when Astorre and his white charger held the Oddi men at bay, slaying many of them and receiving blows upon his shield like the beating of a drum, a young man, hardly more than a boy, stood on an overhanging balcony and watched every detail of the fight. This was Raphael, and it is the first glimpse we get of him in Perugian history. During the succeeding months, while the Baglioni army was attacking each of the Oddi strongholds and laying waste to the whole Umbrian valley, he was within doors learning to paint from his mas-

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"curving vines have artfully coaxed a living presence from a morbid past"

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ter, Perugino. And during the following days of peace he was creating canvases, growing with each in power, and forging on toward the place of world-master.

This was during the year 1498, not long after the most promising of the Baglioni princes, Grifone by name, had married Zenobia Sforza, a half sister to the lovely Floria of the Medicean line.

Grifone was an only son of the gentle Atalanta, whose husband had been cut down by an assassin's knife a month before the boy was born; nor was this young widow a stranger to tragedies, because the noble Galeotto, her father, had died by poison twenty years earlier. So he inherited great power, to which much was added by his marriage with a Sforza—that wonderfully powerful, passionately wicked family, which seemed incapable of putting an æsthetic touch to a single piece of devilment. Other princes of the house, also powerful and who shared in its direction, were his three cousins: Simonetto, Astorre and Adriano.

Such was the condition of affairs at the close of the Oddi war, when everyone again settled down to enjoy a while of peace, though it is notable that peace was never a popular pastime among the Baglioni.

Raphael had been engaged in painting Grifone, and in this way the two young men formed a warm friendship. The artistic temperament of the one ad-

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mired the splendid physique and robust courage of the other, while no man ever lived who would not have been attracted to the tender Raphael. So, as I say, they became fast friends, and one day at the conclusion of a sitting, the prince took his comrade by the arm, urging him to come to the castle. He did not say that a certain girl had watched this rising genius from the safe distance of her window, plying Zenobia with such questions and such prayers that it was the generous wife who had charged her lord to bring Raphael home upon that day.

None of this did the artist know, when at the top of the palace stairs Grifone gave him a playful push into the long assembly room and hastened on to find his wife. For some minutes Raphael stood alone, oppressed by a numb wistfulness; because the stillness of the place, and its sumptuous furnishings, struck a chord that had, perhaps, never before vibrated in his heart—for you must appreciate the fact that some of the laws of psychology were at work; the mystic force that fits us for things to-day which yesterday would have been intolerable.

It was late in the afternoon, and winter. The fading gray light seemed best suited to accentuate each growing shadow, but at one end a hearth shone rosy with snapping logs, and to this he turned. Not till quite near did he see a girl buried in a luxurious chair, moodily gazing at the fire; and the sight

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"here dripped blood from window sills"

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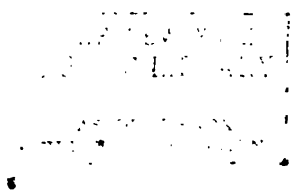

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thrilled him with a nameless pleasure, because he could not have better posed her there himself. The flame lights playing over her face might have been a prototype of the emotions which only a face such as hers could show, and except for a rather sensuous mouth—partially an hereditary trait—she possessed a beauty undreamed of even by the imaginative Raphael.

"I cannot believe that you are flesh and blood," he said in a trembling whisper, "so, if an angel, I pray you ask our God to let you stay a little while—then take me with you when you go! Yet should there be no miracle performed, and you are one of those who breathes and sighs and dreams as I myself, then look at me, I implore you!"

Her breast rose quickly with the conflict it was harboring, and in low tones her answer came:

"I am no angel, nor hardly flesh and blood was I until a voice stole through the languor of a fading day and touched my mortal being into immortality!"

I do not know what else was said. Flames make good listeners, because they die before having a chance to tell.

The old man paused in his story, and I wondered by what power his ignorant brain had struck the key-note of their natures; for Raphael had spoken as Raphael would, and Floria as a Medici. I wanted to call Brentheim's attention to this, but the narrator

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was continuing with the usual: "And you must know, young gentlemen—"

This love that was returned in no small way, showed an instant effect upon the artist's work; and now, having finished Grifone's portrait, Floria came to sit each day—though not the entire time was given up to painting—so that before long a Madonna grew upon the canvas; a picture, were it in existence now, would be housed within a costly temple of its own. This face was all that the genius of Raphael saw in the ecstasy of his passion: noble, beautiful, clean; yet it was this very type of love which the exquisite Floria found unsatisfying.

All of the city now flocked to his studio, and left it marveling. The greatest master they had known, Perugino, never created a thing like this; and the older painter, when he looked upon it for the first time, drew the lad into his arms.

During these days he was blissfully unconscious of Grifone's absence from his life. That young prince had fallen into bad company. Filippo da Braccio, a half uncle, was now constantly at his elbow, as were Carlo Borciglia Baglioni, who was described as "an unquiet spirit," and also a ruffian, leader of the masses, named Jeronimo della Penna.

These three men, partly instigated by the lord of Camerino, were hatching a pleasant little plot to massacre at one fell swoop the families of Guido and

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"lead gentle sheep which look on in mild wonder"

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Ridolpho, by which Perugia would be in their power; yet, since the city idolized Grifone, it was thought judicious to have him on their side, rather than to be among the slain. When first approached about this plan, he would listen to none of their villainy, and even their offer of sovereignty did not tempt him, but finally by a few delicately phrased innuendos concerning his wife and Gianpaolo Baglioni—most unjust it is said, these were—he became fired into yielding.

This pleasant butchery was planned for the wedding festivities of Astorre, of the white horse fame, with Lavinia Orsini, because it was expected that the whole Baglioni connection would be present, and with one stroke all could be annihilated. The festivities began June 28th, and lasted through the fourteenth of August, during which time sports of every description, banquets and pageants were indulged; and reckoning that this dissipation would yield to heavier slumber toward its close, the final night was chosen for the crime.

These entertainments Raphael, now the greatest toast amongst them, attended, in order to be near his Floria; and ladies smiled behind their fans, prophesying that Astorre's wedding bells would hardly cease before ringing in the tidings of another marriage.

The signal by which the conspirators agreed to start their concerted attack was to be a heavy stone

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let fall somewhere about midnight in the courtyard of Guido Baglioni's palace—a thing that makes a weird, grave-yardy sort of a sound under any circumstances —whereupon two principals with fifteen helpers were to rush each of the sleeping men's doors.

The night approached, darkness came and the palace sank to slumber. About midnight the sharp crack of stone falling upon stone was heard, and a moment later the town awoke to find itself in a veritable hell of noises. It was said that people three squares away could hear the gutterings of cutting throats.

The brave Astorre fell in the arms of his bride; Simmonetto, no less valorous, was killed by the half uncle, Filippo, who tore out this warrior's heart and time after time sank his teeth into it. In a short while all were slain and their bodies thrown from the windows to the street.

When daylight came, the frenzied Raphael sought his sweetheart. At the palace he found that the young princess wife had fled with Atalanta, both leaving on Grifone's head a bitter curse; but Floria was wounded and could not go. Now, almost beside himself, the artist demanded how severe this wound could be, whereupon the terrified servant whispered: "In the shoulder, Signor! The sword that pierced the sleeping Adriano pinioned her whom he held in his arms."

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"somewhere down under the eastern walls"

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Two weeks later, when Raphael arose for the first time from a delirium of fever produced by this shock, he crossed unsteadily to the wonderful Madonna, took up a knife and ripped it into shreds. Then he left Perugia forever.

It was a curious sensation hearing the old man in his mediæval hut tell this extraordinary tale, which most frequently ran hand in hand with history, and we stepped out into the sunlight feeling as though we were just stepping from the middle ages.

Brentheim says the Duomo is rich with interest. I did not go, but do know that the Palazzo Publico will entrance you with what I believe to be the most perfect Gothic façade in all Italy. Indeed, this "empress of the hill tops" possesses many things which leave an enduring charm, and yet, sleeping beneath the watchfulness of her great bronze griffin, in the stillness of this hour there is nothing more treasured than your sweet letter, or more lasting than my love for its sweeter sender. Good-night.

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XVIII

ASSISI

WHEN you get to Assisi—reached by a forty-five minute motor drive down the Perugian heights, across a fertile valley through which flows the Tiber, and up a stiff pull to the city gates—you may well imagine yourself back in San Marino, because of the precipitous streets, and their utter disregard for direction.

You will like this quaint old town with its mediæval atmosphere. You will like the occasional glimpse of a girl, coming down the stone steps that connect streets of different altitudes, and the way she carries a sack of grain upon her head, and the way her pretty fingers curl beneath the handle of an Etruscan vase! With eyes half closed you will picture all sorts of intrigues being acted among its twisted alleyways, and you will know the frowning Rocca, that immense gray ruin, which from its higher perch keeps a sullen eye upon the town, was the scene of unparalleled deviltry—or your imagination has deteriorated.

Among the famous people born here were the poet Propertius; also the founder of the Franciscan mon-

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astery, St. Francis, this scion of the Bernardone family and as attractive a free lance as ever thrust a blade, until the military prison in Perugia turned his thoughts divineward. The old monastery of the Franciscans, built in 1229, just twenty years after he founded the order, is perhaps the most interesting place of its kind in Europe. A lady recently wrote from America that the beauty of this church is worth the trip abroad, and while I suspect she may have seen it while under some strong emotion, still, it is not for me to gauge her temperament or criticise her tastes.

This sanctuary, built on the Infernal Hill—a place once outside of Assisi where malefactors were put to death—is indeed remarkable, and the two churches, standing one on top of the other, are in truth worth traveling far to see. Under the lower of these is even still another chapel where the old saint lies buried, having himself chosen this spot "to imitate the humiliations of the Son of God on earth." It inspires a peculiar feeling to enter a large cathedral from the street, and, descending a dark little stairway, step into another church quite as large, and then going down still another flight of steps, find yourself in a third one of some respectable size. Yet in Assisi this is done every day—people just don't think anything at all about it in Assisi!

Adjoining the upper of these is the monastery,

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and, although it was long ago suppressed, several monks have been granted a residence here for life. These black robed priests belong to the close order of Franciscans—that is, the Conventuals—whose vows prohibit them from going into the world; the other branch of this order is the Friars Minor, those jolly little fellows in brown, who spread cheer along the highways and byways of life—but I shall tell you something about these later on.

A tall, gaunt, severe priest showed us through. He was a type reminding me in appearance of Fra Savonarola, the martyred Florentine, and from the tense look about his mouth, and half-closed burning eyes, one felt that there surely must be stripes upon his back from self-inflicted scourging. Brentheim whispered to me that in a religious war this chap would make a hellish leader, and indeed he would. It stuck out from him, just like his white bony finger that pointed with nervous jerks to the various frescoes he was explaining—frescoes of the great saint's life that adorned the walls.

His notion of Francis was exactly what one might have expected from a close-coupled mind which had mildewed under the ceiling of some gray cell, and we left feeling that this celebrated saint possessed not a single human quality—that he had been a man of forbidding temperament, without humor, without a smile, and only fit to work miracles. One can hardly

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"and their utter disregard for direction"

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get very close to a man who does nothing but work miracles, and my interest in him waned. But Saul of Tarsus was not the only wanderer converted in a trice. My own time was near at hand, though little did I suspect it.

From a certain public fountain where housewives come to wash their dishes, one gets a glimpse into the valley where a building, at first glance not unlike the capitol at Washington, stands stern and alone. This is about two miles to the southwest, and is the church and monastery of St. Mary of the Angels, that Franciscan order which received special dispensation to go out into the world. These are the Friars Minor, and the monks wear brown cowls. Theirs, indeed, is the original order founded by St. Francis, but many years ago Benedict XIII addressed the two branches, commanding that for diverse reasons both should be considered as Mother churches—since in the monastery up at Assisi the saint lies buried, and in St. Mary of the Angels the order was first established. Go to this place in the valley, if for no other reason than making a pilgrimage to the scene of my conversion.

The church itself is partly new. That earthquake of 1831 which shook for several months, destroyed much of it except the dome—but let us forget architecture for awhile, except to mention that the friars consider its escape a miracle. A guard at the door

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sent for one of the order to conduct us through, and this turned out to be a rather oldish, short, round man, with laughter wrinkles at his eyes, and a "tummie" that added just the necessary touch to make him a jolly friar. Here was one to whom we warmed, and especially when he addressed Brentheim in very good English, asking:

"You want to be shown through, or become a monk?"

"He is within one syllable of being that now," I could not resist observing, whereupon the old fellow laughed like a boy of ten.

Part of the church, as I have said, is new; utterly, wretchedly new, but its proportions are splendid and immense; indeed being over two hundred feet wide by twice that much in length, and in the center of this great space, directly beneath the dome, stands a quaint little building all alone. From a distance it looked like a log cabin, or the kind of tiny chapel one sometimes comes upon in rural districts, but a nearer view showed it to be of stone. That was it; just a little peaked roof stone chapel, thirteen by twenty-one feet; a little pet, it seemed, guarded by this huge cathedral. Within was a simple altar, and on each side, close against the walls, half a dozen very old and severely straight pew seats stood. These walls, inside and out, were of irregular stone blocks and roughly built.

The gothic entrance was low and the wooden doors

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"old monastery of the Franciscans"

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were smooth where thousands of hands had touched them. On the sill was this inscription: "Hic Locus Sanctus Est," and something about the humble structure made me feel that indeed it might well be "a holy place."

"This," said the friar in a low voice, and serious now, "which is variably called St. Mary of the Angels, the Holy Chapel, the Portiuncula, was built in the year of our blessed Lord 352. It has never been moved from the original site. Our church was built to protect it. When the earthquake that shook from October to March partly destroyed us, the big cupola by a miracle remained standing; otherwise, its hundreds of tons of slate would have crushed this little place."

He spoke with a simple dignity, and placed his hand affectionately against the wall as he resumed: "I must tell you that this gem of holy poverty was built by four hermits who placed in it a relic of the Blessed Virgin's tomb brought from the Holy Land, and for this reason they first dedicated it St. Mary of Josaphat. The name in common use, however, is St. Mary of the Angels, because, as St. Bonaventure has written, celestial spirits often appeared here to mortal eyes."

His own eyes closed for a moment as though in prayer, and one hand touched the rosary at his waist. But the movement was slight, almost shy.

"In the sixth century," he said, looking up, "this

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sanctuary passed to the Benedictines, and in 1182, when the noble lady Pica obtained the favor of becoming mother of St. Francis, angels flew into the little Portiuncula and here sang hymns of joy. Later St. Francis repaired it with his own hands, and, receiving here the grace of his vocation, founded the order of the Friars Minor.

"He was a wonderful man," the priest looked at us with a smile. "He loved the beauties of nature with the passion of an artistic soul, and every winged thing in the forest, every insect in the grass, was his friend. Long days in the woods he would talk and whistle with the birds, calling them about him—for where he was they knew no fear. But of that I will tell you more by and by. Let us enter now!"

Could this be the same St. Francis, I thought, of whom the black visaged friar up on the hill had told us? Surely I had rather think of him as one who loved the woods, the birds, the flowers! But the priest was again speaking.

"As you step across this threshold," he slowly said, "remember his words proclaimed upon this very spot: 'This place is holy: whatever you ask for reverently here, shall be granted to you!' "

There sometimes comes a moment in one's life when it seems good to pray, and my crutches slowed—ceasing their scrape upon the sill—for I had stopped to let my full heart whisper: "Then grant that no

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shadow will fall into the life of her I love!" That is the only prayer I know, Polly.

He showed us then the stones worn deep where pilgrims had pressed their lips—stones worn away by kisses! And yet it is not so strange, for many a heart has melted, and many a heart has been broken, with just a single kiss!

Leading us on, he stopped before a low, squalid thing against the wall; a chapel now, but once the hut in which St. Francis died.

"Here," the priest exclaimed, "he died. He died just after twilight, when the woods were stilled with sleep; but as his last breath fled, the birds—his friends the birds—awoke, and flying in countless numbers sat about him singing threnody after threnody until the dawn. I should like to feel," he added with a wistful touch, "that when I go—but come!" he smiled, "we shall enter the garden."

The sudden yielding, the momentary hungering for things terrestrial—comradeship, hearthstone, home—flew before that smile like a cloud-shadow racing across the face of a verdant pasture, and it was again the jolly friar who conducted us; this time through a long stone corridor where some masons were building a room, and as we went, he talked.

"Another place we have had to build," he said with a twinkle, "a place for these Italians to converse without disturbing the whole order. Talk, talk, talk!

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All the time talk! They are not like other people, but indeed, as birds twittering from dawn till night. St. Francis could not have stood such birds as these!"

He seemed often to shield himself behind some such quick moods of mirth; and later, passing a fresco depicting an incident in the saint's career, when Brentheim made as though to stop before it, the friar exclaimed:

"Ah! One of those modern things just hatched! Do not look at it! I tremble to think how the poor St. Francis would take a stick after that painter were he here to see himself so scandalized!"

In glee Brentheim squeezed my arm as we both laughed with the old fellow. Stepping out into the cloister where the garden was, he walked more slowly.

"This," he began, stopping before a patch of rich loam in which another friar was burying some bulbs, "is the same garden spot used in the beginning of the order. One day St. Francis was kneeling here planting cabbages, when two young men of noble birth came in. They wanted to become friars, they said. The good man, ever a student of human, as well as other nature, looked them up and down, and saw that their devotional enthusiasm was only skin deep. So he said: 'But you are of noble birth! You, who have been reared in luxury, do not know how to work—how to deprive yourselves! Comfort is life to you; you would soon tire here!' Seeing they insisted, he

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turned to one: 'Very well, begin by helping me plant these cabbages!' "

" 'But I do not know how to plant cabbages,' the youth replied.

" 'So I thought,' said St. Francis, 'now watch and learn.'

"So he dug a hole with his trowel and stuck in a plant top down, leaving the roots in the air; seeing which, the other nobleman cried:

" 'Oh, you are not doing that right! Put the tail down if you want it to grow!'

"Whereupon St. Francis, straightening up, said unto him: 'Then, sir, do not bury your talents in a convent!' "

I must explain, by the way, that the friar always used the term "convent" when speaking of his order. Questioned about this, he said it was correct.

A few feet farther he stopped in front of four short columns placed close together in the garden, and here again the twinkle danced about his eyes.

"St. Francis was never a friar," he began. "Against all entreaty he refused to be more than a deacon, but the General of the Friars Minor held daily conferences with him. One afternoon he sought the saint, complaining of a certain brother, so lazy, so quarrelsome and so generally no account that he wanted him sent away.

" 'Does he eat?' asked Francis.

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"'As much as four men!' the general replied.

"'Then he is not ill, and there may be some good in him yet.'

"When the recalcitrate friar appeared, St. Francis repeated the complaint, but offered to give him one more chance which the other gladly accepted.

"'Come with me,' the good man said.

"Walking to this spot in the garden, he bade him take up a spade and dig a grave. This done, he ordered the friar down into it, and to repose himself for death. He then called another friar, telling him to throw in the earth, and as each shovelful dropped upon the unhappy man's body, Francis pretended to be looking at the sky. When at last he saw the punished one rolling his eyes in terror and just about to choke, he leaned over the grave and called down:

"'Is old Adam still alive?' he asked.

"'No,' moaned the friar.

"'Are you convinced that he is quite dead?' was again asked.

"'Very dead!' came the firm answer.

"'Then arise,' bade Francis, 'and lead a better life!'

"And," the priest added, when we had moderated our laughter, "he turned out to be one of our best brothers."

Some few steps beyond this place we stopped under a fig tree, perhaps fifteen feet in height, and surrounded by a low stone wall.

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"I planted this fourteen years ago," he said. "I had been showing two English ladies through our convent and we were passing here when they asked if I had told them everything—if I had missed nothing which their friends might some day come and hear. Indeed, I had told all there was to tell, but they became so insistent that I finally remembered the story of the Katydid, as written in an old print. So they seated themselves, closed their eyes, and listened.

"When at last the tale had been recounted, one exclaimed that no fig tree was here, but I explained that, like St. Francis and the Katydid, it had gone. Whereupon, they set up such a clamor—saying, while, of course, the saint and the insect could not be had, there was no earthly excuse for robbing the story of a tree,—that I promised to plant one. But they wanted it done immediately, even against my assurance it would not grow at that particular season. Yet still they clamored, and really, to stop the noise more than for any other reason in mind, I stepped outside the garden, returning with a small twig from another tree which I stuck into the ground. So they left satisfied, and would you believe it? This is the twig!"

"What is the Katydid story?" I asked.

"Of course," he exclaimed in mock disgust, "I might have known that you Americans have as much curiosity as your English cousins! You do not know

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how I distinguish people of these two countries?" he smiled in answer to our questioning look.

"Englishmen say, 'Make haste,' and then continue to go slow; while Americans say, 'Hurry up,' and are almost instantly out of sight," which showed that the jolly little friar was a keen observer.

"Well, then," he began again, "one day St. Francis was passing through the garden. At that time a very large fig tree stood here, for we have always known the spot. He paused a moment to listen while a katydid sang blithely in the branches, and, being a comrade to all things, he addressed it thus: 'Dear sister, you sing happily and well! Pray let me sing with you!' So he sat upon a stone and together they set up a lively duet. All day long they sang, and all night as well; the next day and the next night also—the dear young man being at this time too inexperienced to know that a katydid can sing forever, and too considerate to be the first one to stop an innocent pleasure. But when finally the tenth day was reached without there having been a pause, and seeing the fallacy of contending with so vociferous a female, he sighed saying: 'Dear sister, I fear that you have sung enough! Let us call this a holy day, so you may rest your voice!'"

Truly, this little friar, with his round "tummie" and twinkling eyes, was a companion for kings to enjoy, and had Brentheim given the word, we should

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have kidnaped him. But his sparkling humor hushed as we now approached a small plot, thick with rose bushes. There again came the look of wistful tenderness as he put out his hand to them.

"These," he almost whispered, "are the roses that have no thorns. You will never find them anywhere but here. One cold, wintry night, being tempted by the devil, the saint rushed out and threw himself naked into the midst of a briar patch growing here at that time, which became instantly transformed into a bed of beautiful thornless rose trees—whose leaves, at least many of them, have ever since been marked with spots of blood. They bloom in May. This year the flowers were a darker red, but last year they were almost pink, and every once in a very great while a white one blooms. I love the roses."

And again his fingers found the rosary at his waist, as though seeking protection from an earthly love of even a thing so pure as flowers.

We looked, and indeed, there were no thorns upon the stems. Also many of the leaves were touched with crimson spots not coming from disease or blight.

Again within the church he took us to a room where little charms are kept—all St. Francis' charms. They were not for sale, but the jolly friar explained that he gave out with one hand and took in with the other—the consequence being that we poured our worldly substance into his lap.

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When Brentheim was out of ear-shot I picked up this inclosed one of silver, stamped with the saint's famous benediction, and turning to the priest asked him particularly to bless it. There was a question in his eyes, which I softly answered by the same words he had spoken at the rose garden, saying:

"And every once in a very great while, a white one blooms!"

He looked at me quietly for several more seconds, then, understanding, blessed it twice and pressed it gently into my hand. I hope it will bring you peace.

Thus was I converted from believing St. Francis a stern, sour visaged man, to thinking of him as one who walked through wood and field, calling the birds, and being possessed of a pleasing sense of humor.

Of course I know he suffered at times periods of religious frenzy, but my friend the monk made me see only the beautiful side which I prefer to remember. I would just as soon forget he said that while lying in the briars, angels came and wrapped him in a white mantle, leading him between heavenly hosts, over a beautiful carpet, to the Portiuncula where Christ and Mary talked with him. Of course, he believed it—I'm not attacking his integrity; but a man's common sense is not immune to criticism when he runs amuck in a wintry night and pitches himself unclothed into a patch of thorns. Good-night.

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XIX

TO ORVIETO AND ORVIETO

IN spite of Perugia's ancient wholesale assassinations and baths of blood, one leaves it with regret, but this is quickly forgotten for the beauties of a drive that has few equals in scenery, and no superior as to road excellence, in Italy. Yet to get this, you will have to leave the beaten track.

I speak of the run from Perugia to Orvieto, a city which should not be missed by any one putting foot on Italian soil. There are two roads to it—a main highway and the communale, or county road. Let me advise you to follow these more obscure and usually hilly roads whenever possible, because we have found them without exception better, and less traveled, than the others.

Perhaps this is so because fewer wheels cut them up; and when I tell you that the method of repairing here is to throw on broken rock, and that during our entire travel I have not seen a steam roller, you will appreciate the advisability of following a route less likely to be in need of, or in process of, mending.

Therefore leave Perugia by the southern gate and start off on the main highway for Todi; but having

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gone four kilometers take the right fork where a sign-post points to San Valentino. Better still, ask someone the direction, for there is almost always a man or woman in sight in Italy.

From this point you will begin my pet drive of marvelous beauty, going right and left, down and up, like over the teeth of a giant saw; passing through San Maria, San Valentino, to Marsciano. Here again inquire the way, this time for San Veganzio, and, at the next crossroad, for Orvieto. There is no chance of getting lost; in fact, you wouldn't mind if you did.

The first few towns through which you pass are of little interest. Marsciano has its church, so has San Veganzio, and as these are the largest two places en route, having a few hundred families each—some of which will be at the gate to meet you—you may like to stop. The country, however, is the factor of importance, giving with a free and generous hand such panoramas as dreams are made of.

From nearly three thousand feet in the air you can look over miles of soft valley, dotted with white specks which closer observation reveals to be villages with their ever-present campaniles; divided by circling silver wires, that your binoculars draw into rivers born back in the more distant mountain realms and now lazily ambling toward the classic Tiber.

You will look down upon some castle town, a for-

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tified place that has stood more mediæval sieges than you have fingers, and gaze upon the tops of uneven, tile-roofed homes where fifty generations of humanity have lived, loved, suffered and died. Or again, the next castle may be in the sky, and you must tilt back your head to see its foundation walls. Then for half an hour you will roll through forests of gnarled and stunted oaks, where the road, dipping, rising pirouetting almost as a dryad through the woods, will surprise you time and again by stopping suddenly upon the very brink of a precipice—only to angle off as though laughing back at your amazement. The highway affords no such treats as this!

Here in these wastes are shepherdesses tending flocks that graze at will over the mountain, the roughest sort of mountain, where lava has oozed up and cooled, like petrified giant mushrooms, crowding vegetation aside. These women, all wearing bright red hooded capes—a convenient color for the sheep to see, and for their own eyes as well, when heavy clouds envelop the mountains and people are apt to go astray—ply a most primitive industry. For, while watching the herds, they spin wool by a method used before the earliest spinning wheels were known. The raw material is placed in a crude bracket at the end of a two foot stick, and this, with a light spindle, is the extent of their machinery.

This stick is held under the left arm, leaving both

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hands free, and with deft fingers they pull out t fibrous mass, pass it through their lips, and twist into thread. Sometimes when it comes from t bracket in a bunch too thick to twist, their white tee grasp and tear it with savage tugs, which gives the a barbaric touch.

For the peasant class in Italy these teeth are pa ticularly white and even, and the girls themselve agreeably pretty—lithe and strong, graceful an quicker than the nimblest of their flocks. I littl knew we were such monsters—or they so timid—until we came upon three of them and Brentheim stopped the car to try for a picture.

Just a moment they stood watching his approach, and then ignominiously fled; jumping from rock to rock, and over rocks, until at a safe distance they again drew into a huddled bunch and regarded him with wonder. He called in the most persuasive of his ways, and at last succeeded—as he usually does with people—in bringing them back. Once finding him a harmless sort, they became quite friendly, chatting with unaffected pleasure, shyly examining his camera, the automobile, the chauffeur, and myself.

As was Brentheim's invariable custom, when people stood long enough still to be photographed, he took their names and addresses in order that he could send back some prints. And here came a pathetic revelation: they had names, of course, but no post-

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"pass it through their lips and spin it into thread"

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"are sheperdesses tending flocks"

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office addresses. They had never received a letter in their lives, or a paper; neither had their fathers, nor any of their ancestors, I suppose!

Never receiving a letter! From morn till night, from year to year, from birth to death, attending sheep up in the clouds with not a finger on the world's great throbbing pulse! Spinning wool by teeth and weaving, thread by thread, the selfsame cloth to act for swaddling clothes and shrouds! Poor, pretty little beggars! We emptied our pockets of pennies, and it was long before this weird encounter gave way to the charms of varying landscape. I finally asked Brentheim what he thought they could do with the pennies, and it resulted in quite a discussion, ending in favor of their babies cutting teeth on them.

Mt. Peglia is the highest point along this road, and you will pass within a few yards of its crest on which has been placed a huge iron cross, marking the 2,845 foot altitude. If the day is clear you will exclaim at the panorama from this place. The descent is quite as interesting as the climb, and when the Chiana valley comes into view, across which you know Orvieto lies, you will probably lean back and give yourself over to thinking of the beauties just past, never dreaming that the greatest surprise of the day is just at hand.

Across the Chiana valley stands a city in the clouds. This is the dazzling, unique Orvieto; one of the twelve

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Etruscan towns destroyed by the Romans 265 B. C. When it first comes into view one does not realize its position because of seeing it from about the same horizontal plane, but after swinging around curves and getting into the valley, you will wonder how on earth a car can ever reach it. The nearer you come, the higher it seems to rise—not on a hill or mountain now, but placed upon a perpendicular pedestal of solid rock, strangely twisted and furrowed—the tufa rock, a volcanic product that crops out of this country all the way to Rome.

Below runs the Chiana river, one of those streams that swells in winter with melting snows and rains from the Apennines, but which in summer shrinks up, leaving bare beds of gravel and sand—a place for cane brakes and fevers. When this is crossed and you find yourself looking straight up toward the curiously situated city, to your amazement it has disappeared—just as the chimneys of a house will disappear when one stands looking up from directly beneath the walls.

The road here takes a long swing, circling the base a mile or so as though reconnoitering for the best way to ascend, and finally decides on a zig-zag cut made in the solid rock. This road, by the way, is a wonder in itself, but seems to receive no share of praise. Nothing that is continually underfoot can ever be much exalted, and especially when being a means to

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"ushers one through the arched and ancient gates"

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"This road is a wonder in itself"

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a fatiguing climb for weary toilers at the close of day. They curse it, perhaps, but never consider its engineering value—or that without it they would not get home.

It ushers one through an arched, ancient gate into a network of narrow, twisting streets, crowded at sundown and deserted at night—probably on account of their ineffectual lighting; so that after nine o'clock all who happen to be abroad seem cloaked with mystery.

Even a fearless man, as some approaching step is heard, seems moved to draw near the fitful glow of those same iron bracket lamps which have flickered for centuries in Orvieto; because the sounds of uncanny footfalls reach one's ears long before the walker comes in sight—and he then appears as if by magic from around some dusky corner that you did not know was there.

Most likely he is an honest tradesman hurrying home, but his cane, thrust back rapier-wise from the flowing cloak he wears, makes one's fancy travel in such bounds that the shadows quickly fit a plume into his hat, and in the silence you can almost hear him hiss: "On guard, Signor!"

We have just been strolling through the nearest streets to our hotel, and, because the hour was late, have come to know their hollowness. Once a girl swept hurrying by, seeming in an obsession of fear to

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hug the opposite wall until well past, and then broke into a run. Long after she had disappeared up one of the yawning human paths, we heard her wood-soled shoes beating a terrified tattoo upon the stones. Then a door slammed, and the town was quiet. It would seem that Orvieto still holds mysteries at night.

When we were snugly in our rooms, the midnight quivered with the gentle thrumming of a guitar—a tender modulation of minors to majors and back to minors, which seemed to splash softly into the sea of clouds that had by now dropped down to wrap the city in their silent folds; and from beneath this mystic depth of gray arose a timid baritone, singing an old serenade of Tuscany to some dew-eyed demoiselle, who sighed, perhaps, and smiled, and dreamed.

"Sleeping or waking, thou, sweet face,
Lift up thy fair and blushing brow;
Hark to my call in this still place,
Lean from thy window casement now!"

It would also seem that there is love abroad in Orvieto.

The streets are paved with lava blocks which are extensively used as building material; in fact, this rock of cellular texture is about the only thing obtainable.

Nearly a hundred years after Pope Boniface VIII fled here and erected his magnificent palace opposite

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"no army could withstand the shower of rocks"

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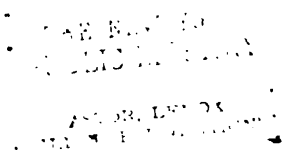

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the cathedral, the Spanish cardinal, Albarnoz, in the fourteenth century, constructed a fortress at the extreme northeastern point of the city—a place that is to me more interesting than any other between Florence and Rome. While the entire town is walled, this spot in particular was intended for the people's last stand, and in here, indeed, the whole population gathered for many a fierce resistance.

Some centuries later, another early pope—for Orvieto has been the haven of refuge for thirty-two Holinesses—converted it into a garden, and to-day it blooms with a profusion of trailing roses that do all they can to cover its grim battlements.

This point commands the road, and hardly any army could withstand the shower of rocks that might easily be dropped upon it from the perpendicular height above. But Albarnoz knew that if the people were to be massed for a siege they must also have amusements, so he built a curious theater where bull fights and other tragic contests were held; even to-day being used for horse shows.

It is a picturesque place, a complete circle in form, with terraced rock seats high enough for safety from the fury goaded bulls. On opposite sides are arched entrances, from which the gladiators may have entered and made their graceful bows to the tense-faced people. Above all this are stone boxes, roofed with flat slabs of stone, where the nobles and ladies

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sat; and the doors of these still bear numerals by which they were reserved, or rented. The arena's roof is sky.

Getting water to the fortress was a problem in its day, and the Florentine architect, Sangallo the Younger, undertook the contract of digging a well in 1257. He died of old age, as did several other architects, before the job was finally completed in 1543—there having been no cessation of work.

This well is cut in solid rock, nearly two hundred feet deep and about seventy-five feet in diameter, with a series of seventy-two gothic windows opening from its walls to light the stairways that lead down to the water. There are two of these, winding around the shaft, but they never meet—nor are they even in sight of each other. Built expressly for donkeys to travel up and down, the steps are wide; perhaps five feet on the outer circumference.

The plan of procedure was this: Each morning a train of donkeys laden with casks was driven into the opening of one stairway, then down the corkscrew passage of two hundred and forty-eight steps to the water level. Here they crossed on a small bridge that spans the diameter of the well shaft, the casks were filled, and they ascended by the other stairs. It is mystifying, and one feels no surprise that several architects died of old age before completing it.

Go to the cathedral by all means. This was erected

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"the streets are paved with lava blocks"

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at the end of the thirteenth century to commemorate the miracle of Bolsena. A young priest, doubting the truth of the transubstantiation, was performing mass in the Bolsena church, when suddenly from five crevices of the wafer in his hand there issued a drop of blood—each representing a wound of Christ. All in the church saw these drops stain the altar linen; whereupon the priest, now much affected, journeyed to Pope Urban IV to confess the miracle.

It so happened to be the same Urban who, in 1264, promulgated by a bull the strict observance of the Corpus Christi festival, in connection with his life-ambition to re-establish the doctrine of Christ's presence in the elements, so you can understand how this disclosure affected his Holiness! He sent for Lorenzo Maitani, the great Sienese architect, and ordered the massive cathedral built.

Its front is strictly a "frontispiece" because it bears no relation to the general building scheme, which is almost identical with the one at Siena, being designed in horizontal black and white layers. The doors were locked and we were told that the keeper of the keys was somewhere about town, so almost despaired of getting in until Brentheim hit upon a novel scheme. Calling up half a score of small boys, he promised a franc to the one who brought back the elusive sexton, and this had been no sooner uttered than they dashed off with a clatter like running horses. The custodian

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was very hot and apologetic when at last he did appear, but his excuse, you may be sure, was convincing.

The vaulting above one small altar is done by Fra Angelico, and although but three months at it, never did the inspired Dominican monk do better work. Here also, in this same chapel, lavish with frescoes by Signorelli, I found myself suddenly transfixed before a Pieta, carved from a single piece of marble by a native of Orvieto, Ippolito Scalza.

There are four life-sized figures in this group, the highest, in the background, being Joseph of Arimethea, holding the ladder and tools with which he released the dead Christ, on whom he is looking in pity. Seated, is the mother, Mary, in whose lap is held the recumbent figure of her son; her right arm passing under his shoulders to bring his face nearer to her own, while her left is raised in a gesture both of bestowing peace and to ward off the slightest added sorrow that would surely crush her to the earth. Bent over him thus, her face is so eloquent of suffering, so artful an intermingling of pain and a dawning pride in some great achievement yet unrealized, that one cannot quite believe the tremor of her lips, the welling tears, the grief contracted brow are but impassive stone.

In this figure alone the artist has so wonderfully thought out his subject that one's first impulse is to step close and whisper: "I, too, am sorry—but glad!"

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"So he built a curious theatre"

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The Christ itself, with one arm hanging limp, is a graceful conception of sleep rather than death, and his wounds have been made mercifully small.

The fourth figure is the Magdalene, crouching at Mary's side and holding the other dead hand, on which she has laid her cheek. Her left hand is placed under one of his feet, tenderly, almost shyly, as though within her has awakened some nameless desire to keep him from touching the world that has been so brutal; to keep him aloof from it until, at any moment now, he will be carried to that place of which he had so often talked, but which, until later, her limited mind could not comprehend. On her face is a smile, such as suffering, loving women sometimes smile; and this in itself is a blending of faith, love and expectancy that merges into an expression of vast contentment.

Perhaps in life she had never laid her cheek upon his hand; now things are different. Now, at last, may be unloosed her great love for the man, which had always stood near—though slightly behind—her great love of the God. Now she can touch the fingers which healed blind eyes, and press them to her face; and in this she is finding such infinite peace, that, were her actual spirit embodied in this stone to crouch for all time beside the silent form, one cannot dispel the belief that she would ask no sweeter heaven.

Immortal Scalza! Here, in a scantily visited cathedral, on a forbidding height of lava, he will live

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as long as marble lives! No Pieta I have ever seen can equal this.

The clouds are lifting and it is almost dawn. When the sun breaks through, he will find me hurrying on to that dreamland where I so often meet you; and if his touch, reaching in your window, should rest a moment on your sleeping face, let it breathe the faintest whisper of the message I am sending. Adieu.

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"a well, with two winding stairs that never meet"

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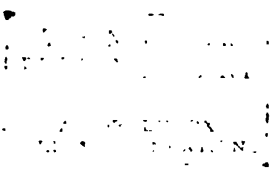

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XX

ORVIETO TO ROME

BRENTHEIM has something up his sleeve which I cannot get at, and you, my precious Polly, could help me if you would. Every now and then since we left Florence he has been glancing at me in the most critical way, as though I were his star horse just about to enter a prize ring. Sorry sort of high-schooling this old plug would do with two bad legs, and two wooden ones! Nevertheless, the Count always smiles when he sees I've caught him looking, and to-day, being pushed for an explanation, he laid his hand upon my arm.

"I'm encouraged," he said, "and have a surprise for you in Rome!"

"I hate mysteries, Brentheim," I told him. "Out with it!"

"None of your business," he affably replied. "So far, this is Miss Polly's and my secret." And there was an end to it; but it left me wondering.

If you will be satisfied with the roads over which I have sent you thus far—and I know your love of beauty too well to doubt it—trust yourself for another fifty-odd kilometers of by-paths before being

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put on the main highway to Rome. Neither is this little stretch out of your way but, indeed, more direct, and is the run from Orvieto to Viterbo, via Bagnorea. The usual route goes through Montefiascone, a hill crest town of exceptional charm, but I prefer missing it for my other route.

You will be sorry to say good-by to Orvieto on the tufa rock. In the brief space of time you have wandered about its crooked streets, it will have woven a charm that you will find hard to shake off, and for many miles down the Chiana valley you will look back —longingly—to be sure of retaining the very latest view of it. While your car is climbing the opposite hills, this vanishes as quickly as it first came into sight and a moment later old fortresses, twisted streets, and congested life have disappeared into the contemplation of vineyards, rolling hills and tier upon tier of mountains which you must cross before reaching Viterbo.

Here toward the south the soil is richer than upon Mt. Peglea's sides, and the peasants are a happier lot. Here, too, your road leads through a thousand Etruscan tombs—though I hesitate to stand sponsor for this indirectly suggested relationship between levity and the dead.

These tombs are few the first part of your journey. Perhaps only one a mile will appear cut in the hillside, and frequently where these occur a peasant cul-

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"above the dismal entrance the tenant was trimming grape vines"

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tivating the land will prefer economizing space to the comforts of a home, thereby using the tomb as a residence. It is already there, and he may save twenty-five square meters of good growing soil, so why not!

We stopped by one of these, where above the dismal entrance the tenant was trimming grape vines. The tomb had long ago been excavated, but sometimes rare jars are hidden by the peasants for family uses and may be bought at a bargain.

I say "hidden by the peasants," because there is a strict law in Italy providing that the fruits of all these excavations be divided with the government. Should a workman on any land dig into some old ruin (or, as in a case near Perugia, when an ox pulling a plow suddenly disappeared, and it was discovered that he had fallen through the roof of a very rare tomb), the owner must notify the provincial governor who will send out experts to see what is there. Under the supervision of these men, all relics are carefully stacked into equal piles, the state taking first choice. Sometimes a ten foot stack of pottery, jewelry, bones and goods will be offset by one little gem of a vase; sometimes nothing rare is found, in which case you would infer that the owner might be welcome to the entire lot. Not so! The government demands its toll, no matter how valueless the find.

This particular fellow answered our inquiry with

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a flash of dazzling teeth. Thirty years ago, he said, his father had dug into the tomb which may have held some things of value; the officials had taken their share, and much of what remained had been broken by use.

A pitcher of exquisite grace and color stood on a shelf outside the opening, and Brentheim asked if that were one—although his trained eye knew it for a genuine, whether from this particular tomb or not. The peasant answered that it was.

"Do you want to sell it?" the Count inquired.

He shrugged his shoulders. "It is all I have for water, Signor!"

"But you can buy another pitcher in the city, and perhaps make a profit. How much do you want for it?"

The peasant thought, and finally asked if ten lire would be excessive. Brentheim looked at me and smiled, while one hand sought his purse.

"Take a long drink to last you," he called, "and bring it to me!"

This done, and the beautiful specimen safely wrapped in one of our rugs, the Count handed the man some paper money.

"Here," he said, "you ask ten lire; I give you a hundred, because the pitcher is worth even twice that much. Are you still satisfied, simpleton?" He smiled good-naturedly at the man, who was quite as genial with his answer.

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"and a few women riding on mules to market"

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"Until the Signor came along," he said, "the pitcher was worth the water it held. I am satisfied, and the Saints preserve your Excellency!"

That is characteristic of Brentheim. Truly, he is fair to the core—nor do I think the peasant lacked a high-minded streak, either. Perhaps the Count's charm has been more particularly forced on me of late because of the tender light in his eyes, the gentleness in his voice, whenever we speak of you—and this is often. We talk about you many hours, and he is familiar with your sweet sympathy from one best qualified to tell of it. Nor can you deny, pretty dryad, that the last time you and he went rowing on Como, you thought him more interesting than you would admit even to yourself. Well, I am glad. There is not a mean hair in his head. Remember my great trust in him should he some day go back to you.

Vineyards for grapes, and mulberry trees for silk worms, with occasional flocks of sheep, and a few women riding on mules to market, seem to include every industry along this radiant country, and it is restful for being without very steep climbs or very sharp curves.

As you approach Bagnorea, the scenery changes without warning. In a trice you leave the smiling landscape and plunge into a convulsive mass of volcanic tufa rock—a place forbidding and almost terrifying in the appearance of its deep gorges, dark crev-

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ices and cindery pinnacles; all of which speak with mute eloquence of the terrific upheaval that one time made this part of Italy writhe in agony. Our chauffeur became suddenly alert, and a warning from the back seat for slower speed was unnecessary.

Along this corkscrew way is a nest of Etruscan tombs—sometimes in tiers—looking out upon the traveler with a stare not unlike that of ghastly skulls. Places emptied of their grandeur, despoiled of their possession of a lost race, in whose stead now lives a breathing, vital people. For the Italian peasant is a saving kind, and what cares he if his bed of straw lies on the spot where for three centuries rested the urn of a glorious princess!

And so these tombs are inhabited. Drying clothes hang from poles leaned against the faces of the rock; children play quite heedless of the shadowy entrances from which on resurrection day may be issuing a thousand forms; old men, whose lives have dwindled into a ceaseless, unintelligible mumble, look out into the future with sightless eyes. Between these extremes of human existence are the young mothers, fourteen, fifteen years of age; dark skinned, bright cheeked, but seldom happy like their sisters of the fields. Their lives are shut in, their minds are restricted, and even their babies are trussed up in papoose fashion, to bawl without apparently eliciting the slightest attention.

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"absorb inspiration from the spirits of that lost Etruscan race"

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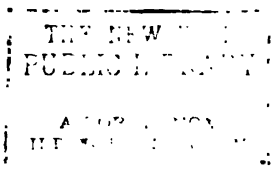

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The young men are straight; a fierce-eyed type with iggy hair falling to their shoulders; and they ap- ar industrious enough if one may judge from the tent of pottery standing in rows outside their doors. or it would seem as though some of these dwellers f the tombs absorb inspiration from the spirits of he lost Etruscans, doling it out in vases of the ame antique design and beauty.

Hundreds of these stand drying in the sun, and yet with all this evidence of thrift the people live in squalid solitude, sleep in beds left vacant by the dead, and coax a scattered crop of stunted vegetables from a soil made nearly sterile by the furies of a once unbridled hell.

This particular piece of tortuous country extends for several more kilometers, and then the road leads so gently down into the valley where the tiny Vezza flows, that one soon finds it hard to realize he has been looking upon such a hive of human bees!

Then comes the climb up to Viterbo, truly called the Nuremburg of Italy, a little town which awoke one morning last year to find itself famous, and blinking into the spot lights turned on from all parts of the world; not because it is surrounded by old Lombard walls and towers, or that here are preserved the forgeries by which Fra Giovanni Nanni claimed for it an antiquity greater than that of Troy, or that it is the central point of that famous grant made by

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Countess Matilda known as the patrimony of St. Peter, or that it has sheltered many popes, or that it lies just at the edge of the Ciminian Forest, or that for centuries it has been known as the "city of handsome fountains and beautiful women";—for none of these reasons in this particular case, but because one of its churches, San Fabris, has been converted into a court room where the Italian government is spending millions to imprison thirty-six men for life.

This is the celebrated Camorra trial, started nine months ago, and likely to continue no one knows how long, since there are yet over three thousand witnesses to be heard. After securing permits to enter we were carefully scrutinized, because the Camorra is a feared secret organization and a bomb from the gallery might make things unpleasant for the King's coronet. It is similar to the American Mafia, but its work lies deeper underground and gives the police a deal more trouble.

A guard said to me: "A member is suspected of treachery, or becoming garrulous in his old age, it is feared he may unmeaningly tell things; the society's attention is directed to this, and the member happens to die. Or an outsider, stumbling by design or accident upon evidence of some crime it has committed, is reported at the next meeting. A week later his family is wearing black."

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"one of its churches converted into a coutrroom"

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The trial is the culmination of a series of crimes the Camorristi have been committing in the most flagrant way, and on which the government has worked for over five years. Italy hopes to crush its power forever.

The right transept of this church is occupied by a large iron cage, like an animal cage, and in this are kept the prisoners—tense, restless, passionate spirits who watch the proceedings with eyes that burn. Six of these men have died. In a small cage nearby sits the accuser, far enough away to escape his fellows' hands, but within earshot of what they intend doing to him if they get out—and that will prove interesting. Moreover, this solitary man shows that he thinks so.

At the left transept are raised the two rows of jurors' seats; while before the altar sit the three gowned judges, flanked by the King's coronet—which corresponds to our prosecuting attorney—and the court secretary. Filling the nave in front of this is the array of defending lawyers, about nine in all. Persons with permits occupy the choir gallery, and truly it makes an odd picture.

As we entered, one of the prisoners had thrust his head between the bars and was violently expostulating over something a witness had just said. I expected to see him properly squelched by the clerk, but nothing of the kind transpired. On the contrary, the

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three judges turned in their chairs and respectfully listened.

I thought there was something familiar about his voice and bald head. My! my! It was Sartosi! The smiling, gentle barber who used to cut my hair in Naples! Positively, it made my scalp creep!

At this moment the accuser thrust two arms from his solitary cage and began excitedly to speak. Again the judges listened with patient interest, apparently forgetting the witness in the stand. He spoke easily and with a splendid delivery. His gestures, aided by hands of exceptional beauty—and as applied to this man's hands I use the term by choice —were the admiration of all. Of course this was partially due to the dramatic setting, for it does sway one to hear a musical voice and sentences that are formed with the skill of a mosaic picture, issue from a creature who is locked up in a bear cage; and then to see pirouetting in the air two pliable, ivory hands, whose skilled fingers, tapering to polished nails and rosy tips, pick each word as it falls from his tongue and hand it to you with nice exactitude. Incredible as it may seem, this man was a Neapolitan coachman! After a while the court returned to the witness' story, but the same sort of interruption goes on many times a day.

You will be in time for this trial, so do not pass through without getting a permit to see it; and while

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"for its ingeniously built fountains"

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in Viterbo, by the way, drive out to Bagnaia, a few miles eastward, for on this road is the interesting pilgrimage-church, Santa Maria della Quercia, with a round campanile that in memory takes one back to Ravenna.

Bagnaia itself is principally remarkable for the fact that, being only nine centuries old, it could have accumulated so much dirt. Adjoining it, however, is the Villa Lante. There you will lose yourself in admiration for its ingeniously built fountains, beginning up the mountain side where a brook is tapped, and carried through most charming convolutions to play about an imposing formal garden which faces the house. Or you can wander through a park of live oaks that may remind you of Northern Florida.

In this district we have seen more activity among army recruits than anywhere since leaving Rimini. Squads of reserves are frequently met, being hiked over roads and fields and whipped into form by natty officers. They are making quite a lark of it and take the gruelling exercise in good spirit.

As we left Bagnaia a company of these chaps came down the road in double quick. The officer, happening to see an unused telegraph pole lying in the grass, gave a short command, whereupon the men seized it, and the next minute were rushing it point on toward an imaginary barricade. As our car seemed

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in danger of answering this particular purpose, we halted, the officer smiled, saluted and apologized, and the perspiring, grinning soldiers, seeming ready to burst into a round of cheers, waved their caps in answer to our friendly raillery. It is all great fun to them now.

Going from Viterbo to Rome there is only one route: through the Porta Romana and gradually ascending Monte Ciminio, at whose highest point of about 3,500 feet is a moldy volcano, long ago having fired its last shot. This Ciminian Forest was thought by the Etruscans to form an impregnable barrier to attacks from the south, and indeed may have answered that purpose on many occasions, until the crafty Rullianus, 310 years before Christ, with a picked legion from the best fighting men the world had until that time known in Roman history, traversed it and laid waste to central Etruria.

For centuries upon centuries the charitable hand of time has left this extinct race securely buried, hidden beneath the ebb and flow of ages, until at last unearthed before a more enlightened world which can understand and love the broken story of its ephemeral struggle.

The pass where your road goes is something less than 3,000 feet, but you will see Lago di Vico below on the right looking like a drop of quicksilver. This beautiful lake lies in another worn out volcanic crater

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"Forbidding, and almost terrifying, in the appearance of its deep gorges"

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basin. Its water is very cold, at places more than two hundred feet deep, and we were told inhabited by trout of prodigious size. As to that, however, all uncaught fish are giants.

That these volcanoes, after so many years of silence, are only sleeping and not dead, is partially borne out by the presence of Monte Venere, a lava cone overlooking the lake from the height of about a thousand feet, because this, geologists say, is of a much more recent formation. Indeed, there are a number of disintegrated volcanoes about here that would cook little Roncigliore in ten minutes were they ever to get loose.

That would be the one and only reason for stopping your car within the walls of this town; just to say farewell to six thousand drudging souls—though I doubt if you find the probability of this satisfaction immediate enough to slow down.

In eighteen kilometers you will pass upon the left another hill-set town, Campagnano-di-Roma, but being off the road and with Rome to make by sundown, we did not go to it; especially when inquiries revealed it to be very much the same as, but smaller than, Roncigliore.

And now the road drops gradually into the vast and barren campagna of the grand old capital itself, so that not long after crossing the trickling Valchetta —once called a river by some facetious geographer—

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straight out of the south will rise the dome of that church built upon the rock—St. Peter's.

Here, at last, Brentheim has promised to reveal his surprise for me. Men have some curiosity after all, haven't they? Something whispers that you are the instigator of this mystery, and could have told me long ago had you been so inclined. That is what makes it sweet to me. Good-night.

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"the most extraordinary Roman tombs"

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XXI

THE CAMPAGNA OF ROME

THIS is the last letter I shall write you for awhile.

We have spent two days driving beyond the city—not so much for the purpose of seeing things, as for talking. It has been hard to make Brentheim leave my side long enough even to take his beloved photographs, until I begged him to go, if only to keep up a pretense of indifference—so deluding ourselves into a mental state which might look toward another motor ride to-morrow.

It is a weird country, this country of the campagna; and not easy to comprehend that its rough surface was once a sky-reflecting bay, interspersed with beautiful islands—all since filled in by volcanic upheavals. As I say, it is hard to believe this, or that even in later ages when the Romans held supremacy over the world, it was a land of prosperous, densely populated towns. Just how large a part the fever played in bringing it to the present dreary waste is an easy guess, and yet its very dreariness adds an interest in the occasional discovery of some decaying Roman tomb. Especially is this so on the road to Tivoli,

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near which are the largest of these, as also those most certainly known to have been used for early Christian churches.

If your chauffeur is smart he can cross from Tivoli to the Appian Way by one of the few obscure lanes—though not after a rain, unless you are willing to plow through mud.

This famous thoroughfare of ancient times, that has been excavated as far out as its eleventh mile stone, is eloquent with many spots of ruined grandeur. Strangely enough, we were just considering whether or not to return when our eye lit upon the diminutive church of Domini Quo Vadis—named from the words which Peter, while fleeing from martyrdom, is supposed to have spoken to Christ, whom he met here in spirit.

I feel almost ashamed for the Christian faith to recount that in this place is exhibited a copy of the Master's footprint impressed in marble—the original being in San Sebastiano. Such unfounded profundity in the preservation of this and like relics may either be laid to crass ignorance or the willful perpetuation of a lie. I might be able to stand the legend of that porphyry slab in St. John of the Lateran, on which it is said the dice were thrown while casting lots for Christ's raiment; or the slab that records his height, making him nearly seven feet tall; or the stairs up and down which he walked before Pontius Pilate—

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"little shops are stuck away in Roman ruins"

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but the impression of a spirit footprint in a piece of marble is somewhat overpowering, and arouses my good Christian ire.

Again, toward Frascati, comes a different character of country; the villa of Count Torlonia for instance, or especially that other charming villa Aldobrandini, with its fantastic grottoes, fairy-like terraces, whispering groups of statuary, and the wonderful ornate fountain from where these things seem to spring.

Life flourishes around Frascati because it is above the reach of Roman fever, complacently looking down on that deadly campagna with something of pity—or, at least, one imagines so, when considering how gentle are its blending colors and ilex-hedged parks. Sometimes, too, the neatest little shops are stuck away in Roman ruins, banked between twentieth century buildings—which all gives a more than usually fascinating atmosphere to the place.

Early this morning we were out again, but taking two lights in the world of surgery who had spent an hour in my room last night, and who will be with me several hours to-morrow while skillful fingers and delicate blades search for my recovery. It was to the southeast this time we went; and, in the excavated Ostia, I dreamed.

What a place, and of what peculiar charm is this city, brought to light after so long a sleep beneath

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the soil! Its silence of ineffable peace steals round one like the hearing of an old tune—that nameless comfort of being unexpectedly transported to an otherwise sweet, dead past. And so this city, coming as it has in such purity from the moldering centuries, says to all those who walk its pallid streets—to all who move and breathe, and in whose pulses beat the vital stream of life—that the Great Excavator will leave nothing dead for very long. Somehow, I needed Ostia to-day—this day before the uncertain to-morrow!

Idling between the irregular columns of a once proud promenade, I saw their added grandeur in the new light of a resurrected glory; realizing that those which stand most perfect now must surely have once been carved from better stuff than the cracked or fallen ones upon the ground, so I stopped before the purest of them all—and named it you. What shattered shaft the final excavation of our souls will be revealed in me, I do not know; but if, like some of those to-day, it may be allowed to stay bowed before the reincarnation of your own perfection, dear, I shall ask no greater bounty of the dim hereafter.

I would shrink from writing out myself in a way like this, did I not now know that you and Brentheim have been discussing me for weeks; nor would I say a word until everything is over, were there not a chance of failure. But this afternoon he confided

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"in the excavated Ostia, I dreamed!"

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many things to me: how he has all along been brutally frank with you; letting you understand the operation will be a pronounced success, transporting me to an absolute physical fitness, if I can endure the three hours of anæsthesia. And he also told you what he should not have told: that the wise men, having weighed my chances, find the balance tilting a wee bit wrong.

Have you suffered? Are you unhappy over the uncertainty, as I am happy to take the risk? Of course, before these questions reach you the thing will have been done, and Brentheim will have sent you his promised telegram—also, perhaps, a little trinket I shall put into his hand to-night.

Were you leaning above my shoulder now, I fear my love would make me ask you other things—but that would be taking an advantage. So forget what you know is in my heart to say, because I want to be remembered first of all as one who played fair to the very end; and the man who exacts a promise in the close proximity of death—a promise which might not otherwise be made—is of that class who would strike the helpless. And yet, oh, Polly, I want to feel that you will miss me more than all the world!

Blame me in no way for so abjectly turning to you in my loneliness. It is not weakness. It is natural, just as a child, homesick in the twilight, would run to the one of all others whom it loves. I am not

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frightened at the gathering twilight, dear, but having always so wanted you, and so needed you—ah, well, this must not go on too far! Yet, if for one little hour to-night I could sit at your feet and rest my head against your lap, feel the cool of your fingers on my face and look with you into the same hearth of snapping logs—if for just one hour, then to-morrow could bring no doubts, either about itself or of what may lie beyond!

He is waiting with the carriage and I must go, because the hospital is closed at nine. By the coming of another night they will have finished the three hour task to determine whether I shall float with you again on Como—rowing you myself, and this time leading you up the slippery steps at Pliniana—or await your coming in some far-off Ostia, of which as yet we do not understand.

Good-night, good-night.

THE END

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"idling between the irregular columns of a once proud promenade"

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